

# WILD WEST



A MAGAZINE CONTAINING STORIES. SKETCHES Etc. OF WESTERN LIFE.

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Price 6 Cents

## YOUNG WILD WEST'S ROYAL FLUSH; OR, ARIETTA AND THE GAMBLERS. *By AN OLD SCOUT.*



ALBERT E. CLARK'S  
OLD BOOK EXCHANGE  
Fisherville, Mass.

And Other Stories



The two gamblers were caught dead to rights. Charlie covered one, while Wild held the other. It is in his coat pocket, Et." Wild said. "Take out your watch. The galoot is a road agent, as well as a gambler."



THE CRIME NOVEL EXCHANGE  
Lock Box 8  
Farnumsville, Mass. U.S.A.

# WILD WEST WEEKLY

A Magazine Containing Stories, Sketches, Etc., of Western Life

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## Young Wild West's Royal Flush

—OR—

### ARIETTA AND THE GAMBLERS

By AN OLD SCOUT

#### CHAPTER I.

#### ARIETTA AND THE ROAD AGENT.

Crack!

The sharp report of a rifle rang out on the still evening air and a fat young buck leaped from a crag and came tumbling down a rocky incline.

"That was a pretty fair shot, for it is easily a hundred yards from here to the spot where the deer was standing. We need some venison, for we haven't tasted any in a week. Hop, I will go with you and help you skin it. We may as well finish the job we have begun."

The speaker was a handsome blonde girl of seventeen or eighteen. She was attired in a fancy riding costume that fitted her perfect form and set off her grace and beauty to the very best advantage.

Her remarks were addressed to a Chinaman, who was standing near her.

The girl had fired the shot that brought down the buck, and now she wanted the honor of helping to bring in the haunches of venison.

The sun had set several minutes before, and darkness was gradually falling upon the Rocky Mountains.

Two or three hundred feet below the point where the girl and Chinaman were standing a campfire was burning, and one could have easily guessed that the two belonged to that camp, for it was a wild part of the country, close to the dividing line of Wyoming and Colorado.

At the time of which we write it was quite dangerous to travel over the trail that led from Elkhorn to Cheyenne, for outlaws and treacherous Indians were to be met with when least expected, and bands of road agents preyed upon the stage-coaches that ran to and fro.

The distance between the two places was about forty-five miles, as the crow flies, but the trail wound in and out, and made it about fifty, making it just about all four horses hitched to a heavy stage-coach could do between suns.

"Did you get him, Et?" a voice called out from the camp below.

"Yes," replied the girl. "Stay right where you are, Wild. Hop and I will bring in the game."

Then she started for the spot where the deer had fallen, the Chinaman running to keep up with her.

Rifle in hand, and tripped gracefully over the few level spots she came to.

The buck had dropped into a little hollow that was almost surrounded by hanging vines and tall bushes, and as a hill intervened, the camp could not be seen from the spot.

"Where our deer fallen, Missy Arietta?" asked the Chinaman, as he saw the girl looking around for it.

"Right here, as near as I could tell from where I stood when I fired, Hop," she replied. "I guess I had better help you get him on your shoulder, and then you can carry the game in. We will let Charlie do the skinning at the camp. Ah, here it is!"

She had suddenly come upon the buck, which was still quivering in the throes of death.

Hop, as he was called, rushed up and gave a nod of satisfaction.

The two then stooped to lift the buck, so he could get it over his shoulder.

But before they could lift the slain animal from the ground a low voice exclaimed:

"Wait a minute!"

The girl and the Chinaman quickly arose.

Before them stood a masked man, a revolver in his hand.

"I advise you both to keep perfectly quiet," he said, in the same low tone of voice. "I am not here to harm you, miss; I simply want your money and valuables. However, I care nothing for a human life, and if either of you utter a cry that can be heard in the camp near by I will shoot you both dead where you stand! I am Greg Green, the captain of the road agents of the Cheyenne Trail!"

There was nothing but astonishment depicted on the face of the beautiful girl.

Not the least sign of fear was shown by her.

She had been taken completely by surprise, yet she showed no signs of being afraid.

The Chinaman promptly held up his hands, for it was not his first experience with road agents, and he knew what was best for him.

A road agent hardly regards the life of a Chinaman as being worth much, anyhow.

"You are a sensible heathen, it seems, and you show that you think that life is worth the living," went on the masked villain.

Then he stepped up close to the girl, and the muzzle of his revolver almost touched her head.

"I will take this," he said, and then he took hold of a little gold chain, and pulled a handsome watch that was set with diamonds from a pocket in the red velvet waist she wore.

The girl's eyes flashed dangerously, but she evidently thought he was enough of a scoundrel to shoot her, so she said nothing.

"Have you any money about you, miss?" the road agent asked, as he slid the watch in his pocket.

"No!" she answered, rather loudly.

"Hush! I don't want to have the blood of such a pretty creature as you are on my hands. I mean what I say, girl."

There was no mistaking his meaning, so she remained perfectly quiet.

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"What have you got that is worth taking, you heathen?" And the masked villain directed his gaze at the Chinaman, still keeping the revolver leveled at the girl's head.

It was evident that, of the two, he thought her the most dangerous to handle.

"Me gottee two dollee," faltered the Celestial, acting as though it would almost break his heart to part with it.

The road agent laughed softly.

"I rather think you are telling the truth, so I won't bother to search you. You may keep your two dollars. This pretty little watch will do me just now. I shall make it a present to my sweetheart, who lives in Cheyenne. Good-night, miss!"

As quickly as he had come he disappeared in the bushes, leaving the girl and the Chinaman standing there.

So softly did the villain walk away that they could not hear his footsteps.

"Lat velly badee, Missy Alietta," ventured the Celestial, in a voice of sympathy.

The words seemed to bring the girl fully to herself again.

Holding her rifle ready to shoot, she darted into the bushes where the robber had disappeared.

But at that moment the clatter of receding hoofs was heard, and then she knew that he was gone.

There was a narrow pass running through a ridge of earth and rock right there, and it was through this he had rode.

But she ran to it, and tried to catch a glimpse of the horse and rider.

But this was impossible, for the pass took a turn to the left, and that made it impossible to see through it.

"I guess we had better get back to the camp and report, Hop," the girl observed, coolly. "I have lost my watch, and I would not have sold it for a thousand dollars. But never mind! If Wild don't get it back for me I will miss my guess."

The Celestial nodded, and then he started to leave without taking the slain buck.

"I guess we will carry out the programme as it was intended, Hop," she said. "Just get the deer on your shoulder. It is hardly likely that we will be interfered with this time."

"Allee light, Missy Alietta."

She helped him, and when the carcass was balanced on his shoulder they set out for the camp.

Only once did the fair girl turn and look at the spot where she had been robbed of her watch.

She did not expect to see the robber even then, but she could not resist taking another look at the place.

They were not long in getting to the camp.

"What kept you so long, Et?" asked a dashing-looking boy with a wealth of chestnut hair hanging over his shoulders, as he stepped from the camp to meet them. "Was it further off than you expected, or was it hard to get where the buck fell?"

"It was easy enough to get there, Wild, but after we did get there we were surprised by a masked man, and he took my watch," she replied, calmly.

"What!"

The dashing young fellow looked at her in amazement.

"It is a fact, Wild. I was robbed of my pretty watch, and right within your hearing, at that."

A tall man with long black hair and a mustache of the same hue leaped forward as though he had been shot out of a cannon.

He was closely followed by a boy and a young woman in her twenties, and a girl in her teens.

They were all the picture of astonishment.

A Chinaman greatly resembling the one carrying the slain deer remained standing by the campfire, but he, too, evinced surprise at what had been said.

Right here we may as well let the reader know who all these people were.

They were Young Wild West, the Champion Deadshot of the West, and his friends.

Young Wild West was, without doubt, the best-known hero of the Wild West that has ever been written of.

He and his two partners, Cheyenne Charlie and Jim Dart, had experienced more thrilling adventures and hair-breadth escapes than falls to the lot of ordinary people, and they had become so used to that sort of life that they were always traveling about the wilds of the great West, looking for fortune and adventure.

Cheyenne Charlie was the tall man spoken of. He was an experienced scout and Indian fighter, but he relied upon the judgment of Young Wild West at any and all times.

Cool under any conditions, as brave as a lion, quick as a

panther, and true as steel, it was no wonder that the young deadshot was called a hero.

Jim Dart, the other boy, had been born and reared on the frontier, and knew much of woodcraft, but he did not think he half compared with Young Wild West.

The beautiful girl, who had shot the buck and then been robbed of her diamond-studded gold watch, was Arietta Murdock, the sweetheart of Young Wild West; the young woman was Anna, the wife of Cheyenne Charlie, and the other girl was Jim Dart's sweetheart, a very pretty brunette, rather delicate looking, but strong and hardy, for all that.

The two Chinamen were the servants of the party, and good ones they were, too, as will be seen later on.

Young Wild West listened calmly to his sweetheart's recital of what had happened to her.

It was now getting so dark that the shadows were deepening in the distance, while the stars were beginning to show in the blue vault overhead.

Curious-shaped peaks and jagged rocks loomed up on all sides of the camp, and the moving clouds that hung over them made them appear fantastic and unreal.

There was a sort of charm about it all, but our friends had no eyes for such things just then.

They were all thinking of the daring robbery that Arietta was the victim of.

"So he said his name was Greg Green, and that he is the captain of a gang of road agents, eh?" Young Wild West remarked, when the girl had told her story. "Well, I am glad he was kind enough to let you know who he was. That will help us to get him. Et, don't be a bit alarmed about your pretty little watch; it is not likely that the villain will do any harm to it. I'll guarantee to get it back for you, and that before many hours. There is no use in trying to find Greg Green just now, for he is no doubt in some hidden retreat by this time. The fact that he was alone makes it almost certain that his headquarters are not far away."

"That's right," spoke up Cheyenne Charlie. "Ther measly coyote might think that he done a mighty smart thing, but he'll find out that he has got up agin ther stiffest game he ever played in his life, I reckon."

"He must be a new hand in these parts," remarked Jim Dart. "I don't remember of having heard the name Greg Green before."

"Oh, they come and go, such fellows as he is," answered Young Wild West. "When it gets too warm in one place they go to another. By and by we will take a little scout around and see if we can locate him. It may be that he has camped with his followers along the trail, the same as we have."

Our friends had left Cheyenne at noon that day, and as it was sunset before they found a spot to camp that just suited them, they had not yet had their supper.

Arietta had caught a glimpse of the buck as it was trotting along at the top of a cliff, and picking up her rifle, she had called Hop, the Chinaman, to follow her and bring in the game after she brought it down with a bullet.

Of course, they did not intend to eat any of the meat of the buck that night.

The animal heat would leave it by morning, and then it would be fit to eat.

Cheyenne Charlie undertook the task of skinning the animal, and being an adept at that sort of business, he soon had it done.

The skin was saved, and what they did not want of the carcass was tossed over a near-by cliff.

Meanwhile the Chinaman, who had remained standing by the fire while Arietta was telling her story, had resumed his work of getting the evening meal ready.

He was the cook of the party, and he bore the name of Wing Wah.

Hop Wah, the other, was his brother, and though they looked alike, they were not in disposition, intelligence, or anything else, save that they were both human beings with yellow skins and long queues.

Wing was a simple-minded, every-day Chinaman, and Hop was as shrewd as anything that had ever crossed the Rocky Mountains. He was a very clever sleight-of-hand performer, an expert gambler, and he liked whisky.

Besides these accomplishments, he could lie faster than an Indian pony could canter, and do a little stealing, just for the fun of it, once in a while.

But he had rendered valuable service to Young Wild West and his friends, playing the part of a life-saver on more than one occasion and that made him solid with them.



Hop had a way of happening around just when he was wanted, and though he was no fighter, he could do a few things sometimes which answered the purpose.

There was lots of fun to be had with him, for he liked foolish horse-play, and was always ready to perform his magic tricks.

He felt a bit sheepish because he had stood by and allowed Arietta to be robbed, but he had been so badly surprised that there was really no chance for him to interfere without making his death certain.

"Me meet um load agent some timee," he said as he was left to keep a watch, while the rest ate their evening meal, "len me showee lat me no 'flaid."

## CHAPTER II.

### SILVER BOOM, THE NEW MINING CAMP.

Young Wild West and Cheyenne Charlie left Jim Dart in charge of the camp after supper was eaten, and started out to try and find out where Greg Green was.

That he had a gang with him somewhere was evident from what he had told Arietta.

But the two searched around for nearly an hour without finding any traces of the villain.

Then they returned to the camp.

Young Wild West and his friends always made it a point to keep a guard during the night, no matter where they were camping.

If it was in a mining camp, right near the shanties of the miners, they did it; and if it was out on the plains in a hostile Indian country they kept a watch.

Experience had taught them that they could never tell just when danger would come.

Our hero had made enemies, because he always stuck out for the right.

Anyone who does that is bound to make enemies.

There were many who would have been glad to get the chance to shoot him down from behind, but they were afraid to face him and fight out the grudge on the square.

Wild and his two partners always took turns at keeping awake through the night.

Jim Dart was left to do duty until eleven o'clock.

Then Charlie would get up and stay on until half-past two, and Wild would watch the rest of the night.

This arrangement gave them all the sleep they needed, for they had learned to sleep sound when they did sleep, and that gave them all the benefits required.

The night passed without an interruption.

When six o'clock arrived all hands were up.

Our friends had never traveled this particular trail before, so they did not know exactly how far they were away from a settlement or mining camp.

They knew that the distance over the trail from Cheyenne to Elkhorn was about fifty-five miles, but they had not inquired as to whether there was any place on the way.

They were about twenty-five miles from Cheyenne when they went into camp the night before.

After breakfast, in which venison steaks played the leading part, they were ready to pack up and be off.

The trail was but a few yards from the camp, so when the pack-horses had been loaded by the two Chinamen our hero and his friends mounted and set out, proceeding in a south-west direction.

The steed Young Wild West rode was one of the most magnificent specimens of horseflesh to be found in the whole West.

It was a sorrel stallion that had been broken to the saddle by the boy himself, and since that time Spitfire, as he had named him, had been a faithful companion, and had carried him on more than one perilous ride to safety.

The others all had as good horses as money could buy, so it will be seen that they were very finely equipped.

The trail ran over ground that was fit for the stagecoach, so that made the way pretty clear for them, mounted, as they were.

"Just get a good jog on the pack-horses, you heathen galoots!" said Cheyenne Charlie. "I see fresh hoofprints, so that makes me think that ther measly coyote what robbed Arietta of her watch has gone this way with his gang."

Wild had seen the fresh hoof-prints, too, but he had said nothing.

He was of the same opinion as the scout.

But the funny part of it was that the prints had not shown until they got a hundred yards south of their camping place.

This would make it appear that the horsemen had left the trail in order to get around our friends, or else they had come from a different direction across the country.

All hands took a look at the hoof-prints now, and many were the comments.

"I hope Greg Green has gone this way, Wild," said Arietta. "It must be that he has several with him, though, and what if they should ambush us? He has my watch, but it may be that he wants what money there is in our party."

"Well, if he does, Et, he will keep right on wanting," was the reply. "As far as an ambush is concerned, I guess we will be able to prevent that. The prints we see were made by horses at a walk at the first go-off, but now you can easily tell that the horses were on a gallop. When we come to them, where they show that the horses were walking again, we will slow down. Then I will go ahead and see whether the horses have left the trail or not. If they have we may expect that they are waiting for us. The ground is pretty soft and dusty here, and the dew has not dried up yet. That is what shows that the hoof-prints have been made but a short time ago."

Wild knew just what he was talking about, and the rest knew it, too.

They followed the trail for about five miles, and then they suddenly came to a fork where there was a new trail leading off to the right.

Though wheel ruts could be seen, it was not the regular stage-coach trail.

As our friends came to a halt to ascertain which way the band of horsemen had gone they suddenly noticed a crude sign-board with a hand pointing to the right.

Beneath the hand was the following:

"5 MILES TO SILVER BOOM,  
"THE NEW CAMP."

Young Wild West gave a nod of satisfaction.

"If the fresh hoof-prints lead to the new camp, there's where we will go," he said.

Cheyenne Charlie quickly dismounted.

The ground was rather hard and stony there, but in spite of this he was less than a minute in finding out that the horsemen had turned on the right fork.

As he reported to that effect the question was settled right away.

So they headed for the place that was called Silver Boom, according to the sign.

Half a mile on the new trail they came to the soft ground again, and then they could see that those who were riding ahead of them had their horses on a gallop, which meant that they were hurrying to get to their destination.

"Ther measly coyotes is ridin' right inter ther camp, I reckon," remarked the scout.

"If they have kept right on going they must be there by this time," answered Jim Dart.

"That's right," nodded Wild. "Well, we will see if Arietta can pick out the villain who stole her watch. He was masked when he did it, but she may be able to recognize him."

"He was a man of medium size," said Arietta. "As there are so many like him in that respect, and as I failed to take note of his clothing, it may be hard for me to pick him out. I think I would know his voice, though."

"Well, don't worry, Et; we'll manage to get him. You are going to have that watch back, as sure as you are riding that horse of yours!"

The girl smiled.

That she believed him there was no questioning.

Wild had given her the watch some time before, and she had managed to keep it so far.

True, she did not always carry it with her, but she had taken it this time, since they had started to ride all the way to our hero's ranch in Texas, on the Rio Grande.

They intended to ride south, following the Rocky Mountains until they got to El Paso.

Five miles is a short distance, indeed, for those used to the saddle to cover.

It did not seem more than a few minutes when our friends came in sight of a little mining camp that was located on the bank of a rather wide creek.



It lay almost straight west from the regular stage-coach trail.

"Well, there is Silver Boom," said Young Wild West. "I guess it is a new camp, by the looks of it, and a very new one, at that. There are not more than half a dozen shanties in it. The rest of the living places are tents."

"There is a gin-mill there, all right," observed the scout, with a grin. "My! but that is a good, big sign ther galoot has put out."

Though they were a quarter of a mile from it, they could distinguish the word "SALOON," on the upper part of one of the brand-new shanties.

"Me likee hully uppee, so be," remarked Hop Wah, and then he made a grimace and rubbed his stomach.

"You are getting sick, I suppose," said Wild.

"Ther heathen galoot always gits sick as soon as he knows there's a chance ter git whisky," retorted Charlie. "He gits sick at ther sight of a sign, even. But it is wonderful how quick he gits well after he gits a swaller or two of tanglefoot."

"Well, Hop," our hero admonished, "I don't want you to go and get boiling drunk as soon as we land in the mining camp. You may be needed to do a little fighting, for if we run across the galoot that stole Arietta's watch there will be a lively time for a little while. Lead will fly as thick as hail, providing those galoots have got any sand in them."

"Me no gittee dlunk," Hop hastened to assure him. "Me wantee one lillee dlink of tanglefoot, len me be allee light. Me fightee allee same Melican man."

The scout grinned.

He knew how much the Chinaman could fight.

"You licked a whole crowd, ter my knowledge," he remarked, "but yer didn't do it by square fightin'. Yer always had ter set off a blamed old firecracker, or some other thing that would scare ther daylights out of an ordinary man, afore yer done anything that was good."

"Me savee Misler Charlie's life by shootee off um fire-clacker once," the Celestial answered, forgetting that he had a pain, and grinning broadly.

"Well, that's right, Hop. You're always on hand when yer needed ther most. Blamed if I won't stand treat when we git ter that shanty where ther jig-water is sold."

Charlie had a warm spot in his heart for the Chinaman, even if he did pile it upon him pretty strong sometimes.

Wild said nothing in the way of objection.

He knew that Charlie liked a little strong drink once in a while.

At one time, before he married Anna, he used to go it pretty heavy.

But he had taken the advice of the dashing young dead-shot, and now he only took a drink occasionally.

Neither our hero nor Jim Dart had ever tasted strong drink.

They got along very well without it, too, as may be supposed.

The party rode into the camp in an easy-going way, for mining camps were nothing new to them.

They could see that a number of men were at work in various parts of the ground that had been staked out, and that some machinery was lying about ready to be put in use.

"It must be that they have struck it pretty good here, or they would not have that machinery here," said Wild.

"Well, there is no end of gold and silver in these parts," answered Jim Dart. "The only thing is to find just where it is. Sometimes it is found right on the surface, and then, again, it lies far under the ground. I suppose the day will come when there will be an overplus of both gold and silver."

"I don't know about that, Jim," and the scout shook his head. "I reckon everybody would like ter have plenty of gold an' silver. That's ther stuff they make money out of, yer know."

"Gold is the real thing, Charlie," spoke up his wife. "That is worth the same the world over. Silver is not."

"But I reckon silver would be worth jest what our government said it was, though," the scout insisted. "This here is ther only real country there is. I ain't never been in any other countries but Mexico an' Canada, an' if yer kin tell me what's there fur a free-born galoot like me, I'd like ter know. If they didn't want ter take our silver fur what our government says it's worth they could let it alone! We kin

git along a blamed sight better without them than they kin without us."

But the argument was cut short, for they now were right in the heart of Silver Boom.

They were being eyed by a motley crowd of men that had gathered in front of the saloon.

It was the girls that were the attraction, for as yet no females had come to reside at the camp.

Wild counted seven horses, saddled and bridled, standing near the saloon, and he made up his mind that they belonged to the party that had arrived ahead of them.

He looked around and saw an open space near the biggest shanty to be seen, which had a sign across the rather high front, declaring that it was a store.

He gave the word, and they rode over to the spot and dismounted.

The miners gave a cheer for the girls, but were not insulting in any degree.

Just as our friends were thinking of unloading the pack-horses a man came swaggering out of the saloon. He came straight across the street, and our hero could tell by his manner that there was going to be trouble.

### CHAPTER III.

#### WILD DOES SOME FANCY SHOOTING.

The fellow was a rather good-looking man of medium height and build, and he could not have been much older than thirty, by his looks.

But there was an air about him that told that he was up to some mischief.

"Good-morning, strangers," he said, rather mildly. "So you've come to Silver Boom to strike it rich, have you?"

"Yes," answered Young Wild West, thinking it best to let him have his own way about it.

"And you have brought ladies with you, I see?"

"Yes, the girls go around with us sometimes. They like an open air life, and they are not afraid of the dangers we sometimes come across."

The stranger smiled.

Then he took off his hat and bowed to the girls, after which he looked at Wild in silence for the full space of a minute.

"You are quite a likely-looking lot—you, especially, young fellow," he went on to say. "Where do you hail from, if you don't mind telling?"

"Well, I have three places that I call home," our hero answered, calmly. "One is in Weston, in the Black Hills, another is in Nebraska, and the third is in Texas. I am not at either place much, though."

"Is that so?"

"Yes, that is about the size of it."

"Well, suppose you let me know who you are? I am a stranger here, myself, and I want to get acquainted with everybody in the camp as soon as I can. It makes it more pleasant, you know."

"My name is Young Wild West."

"Yes? I guess I have heard of you, then," and the fellow arched his brows in surprise. "You are the so-called Champion Deadshot of the West, then?"

"Some folks say I am," Wild answered, not the least bit worried over what he was quite sure was coming.

"Well, are you such a good shot that you are entitled to be called the champion?"

"I am always ready to defend the title."

"In what way?"

"In any way."

"That is pretty broad, isn't it?" and the man took a chew of tobacco and smiled at the girls. "Suppose a fellow was to ask you out to try your luck shooting at him, while he shot at you at the same time—what then?"

"Oh, that would be all right. I am always ready for anything that comes along."

There was so much coolness about the dashing young dead-shot that the man showed signs of being more surprised than ever.



But he was a remarkably cool sort of a fellow himself, and he forced a smile.

"I am glad to meet such a boy as you are," he said. "I can't say as I ever saw anyone like you."

"I too, am glad," answered Wild. "If I am different from the general run of boys I can't help it, I suppose. It is a way I have. Are you going into mining here?"

"Well, not for a while. I am not one of the sort who was cut out for hard work. I am going to stay around here and speculate a while. I belong over in Cheyenne."

"Is that so? What is your name?"

"Ben Brown is my name."

"Oh, yes! I heard of you while I was in Cheyenne."

The man looked at him keenly, but did not show surprise.

The fact was that Wild had never heard of such a person.

He did not believe he belonged in Cheyenne, either, for during the few days our friends had been in that town they had never heard of him.

For reasons of his own he thought he would make out that he had heard of the man, though he knew that he would not be believed, unless he really was from Cheyenne.

Ben Brown, as he called himself, looked around at the party and turned to go away.

But he suddenly changed his mind and said:

"Young Wild West, I challenge you to shoot against me."

"All right, Mr. Brown, I accept the challenge. Whatever way you want to do it will suit me."

"Well, we'll shoot at a mark."

"All right."

"I don't claim to be the champion deadshot, as you do, but I will say that I can shoot pretty well."

"I am glad to hear that. But there is nothing strange about it, after all. There are lots of people who can shoot pretty well. Those who live in this part of the country should know how, for there is no telling just when it will be necessary to shoot to defend one's life, or to keep from being robbed by road agents."

Wild certainly was of the opinion that the man was one of the gang that had come into Silver Boom in advance of them, and that being the case, it might be that he belonged to Greg Green's band of road agents, if he was not the villain himself.

He looked at Arietta, but she did not act as though she recognized the voice of the man.

There was a doubt then, but Wild meant to put it pretty hot to the fellow.

There was no mistaking but that Brown was trying by degrees to pick a row.

His every manner indicated that.

When he issued the challenge to Wild to shoot against him there was a sneering smile on his face.

While the conversation was going on the two Chinamen had been busy unloading the pack-horses.

They had a system about doing this, so it did not take them long.

"I am sorry I came over to see you so soon," said Ben Brown. "I should have waited until you got settled. Going to make your camp here, I suppose?"

"For a while, providing the owner of the land here does not object," our hero answered. "But that makes no difference in regard to the shooting. I am ready to defend the title I hold."

"Very well. I will show you one of the shots I can make. I am going to shoot off the end of that Chinaman's queue—the one to the right, I mean. Then you try the other."

"You need not bother about shooting at the Chinaman's queue, Ben Brown. He thinks as much of that queue as you do of your nose."

"He does, eh? Well, I never yet saw the Chinaman I was afraid to shoot at. I am going to pick off about an inch of his queue."

"If you do I'll pick off an inch of your nose!"

That started matters going in the way the man wanted them.

He was in for a row, and now was his chance.

But he was altogether too cool to suit him.

"You'll do what?" he cried.

"You heard what I said, I guess. Are you hard of hearing? If you are I'll say it again."

"I am not hard of hearing, but just say it again, will you? Perhaps I didn't understand you right."

"Well," retorted Wild, "I believe you said you were going to shoot an inch off one of the Chinaman's pigtailed."

"That's just what I said, Young Wild West."

"Well, then, I said if you did that I would shoot an inch off your nose! I guess that is plain enough for you, isn't it?"

"Yes, but you can't mean what you say!"

"Oh, yes, I do; I never say anything I don't mean. Those two Chinamen are in our employ, and it is for us to protect them against abuse from the unprincipled men who would injure them. See here, Mr. Ben Brown! I can see about as far through a mill-stone as the next one, and I knew what your game was the minute you came out of that saloon. You came over here for the purpose of picking a row with us. Now if you want a row just sail in!"

Wild had stood it about as long as he could, and he now got out in his true style of doing business.

Brown looked at him coolly for a few seconds, and then he laid his hand on his revolver.

As quick as a flash Wild had his out and on a level with the man's breast.

"You just point that revolver straight in the air, and see to it that you stand perfectly still!" he said, commandingly. "I mean what I say, Brown!"

"Wha-a-a-at!" stammered the villain—for villain he was, beyond the shadow of a doubt.

"Do as I say!"

There was a peculiar ring in the boy's voice as he said this, and the face of Brown turned a shade paler.

There was a crowd of probably two dozen in front of the saloon, and just six of them started to come over.

"Charlie," said Wild, not taking his eyes from his man, "if anybody starts to interfere in this game just put a button-hole in him!"

"Yer kin jest bet your life I will!" exclaimed the scout, who was itching to get in a row just then.

The six men did not come all the way across the street when they heard this.

The scout had a revolver in either hand, and Jim now pulled one of his.

They both looked as though they meant business.

"Hooray!" yelled a man standing in the doorway of the saloon. "I reckon them galoots can't be scared very easy. It's Young Wild West and his pards! Boys, give 'em a cheer!"

The "boys" responded nobly, and their cheers echoed among the surrounding hills.

This demonstration made our friends feel good.

There is nothing like finding friends in a strange place.

But Young Wild West did not want the miners of Silver Boom to help him take care of the seven villains.

With the help of his partners he was perfectly able to do it.

There was a smile on his face as he saw Ben Brown slowly raise his revolver over his head.

"Is your shooter cocked?" he asked.

"No," was the retort.

"Cock it, but keep it pointed straight in the air. If you don't something might happen to you."

"What are you going to do, Young Wild West?" came from the lips of the man in an anxious tone of voice:

"I am going to show you how well I can shoot. I have won the title of Champion Deadshot, and I want to show you that I have a right to the title."

"But——"

"Never mind, now. You do just as I tell you."

The revolver was cocked and held straight in the air.

Then Wild stepped around until he got just the position he wanted.

Up went his six-shooter until it was on a line with the one Ben Brown held in his hand.

There was a deathly silence for the space of two or three seconds, and then—

Cra-ack!

Two reports, blended into one, rang out.

Brown knew what had happened as soon as anyone else did.

Young Wild West had hit the trigger of his revolver with his bullet, and caused it to go off almost at the same instant the shot was fired.

But one of the six men in the middle of the sandy road was hopping about on one foot now.

The bullet from our hero's shooter had glanced from the trigger of Brown's weapon and hit his boot top, just grazing the skin on the calf of his leg.



Wild laughed at his antics, for he knew he could not be hurt much.

If the bullet had lodged in his body anywhere he would have dropped to the ground.

"I didn't mean to hit anybody," he said, calmly. "I got in what I thought was the proper position to not do it. I had to be mighty careful, or I would have hit your fingers, Brown. You never saw a shot like that, did you?"

"No," was the reply.

He was still holding the revolver as he had been told to do. Crack!

Wild fired again.

This time his bullet hit the shooter near the end of the barrel, and it fell from the man's hand.

"Why didn't you hold on to it?" the boy asked, with a smile.

"It went out of my hand before I knew it," was the reply.

"Oh; all right. Now, let's see what you can do in the line of shooting. Just order me to hold my shooter up and cock it, will you?"

"Will you do it?"

"No! It is for you to make me do it, the same as I did to you. That is part of the game, you know."

Ben Brown turned and walked to the saloon, without stopping to pick his revolver from the ground.

He had been crushed—utterly crushed, and that was all there was to it.

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### THE GAMBLERS OF SILVER BOOM.

Ben Brown never once looked behind him as he went into the shanty saloon.

He had had quite enough of Young Wild West for the present.

His men slowly followed him, though some of them acted as though they were not satisfied with the way things had turned out.

The keeper of the saloon had a broad grin on his face as he waited for Brown's order.

"Whisky," said the man who had been called by our hero, and brought to the round turn.

The rest took the same.

"Pretty bad sort of a youngster ter tackle, I reckon," observed the saloon man.

"Well, I'll have to admit that he downed me fair and square," was the reply. "I'm a pretty good one with a shooter, too. He was a little too quick for me; but that was because I under-rated him, I suppose. But it is all right. I don't bear him any grudge. Fair is fair with me, every time."

This remark set the villain right before his hearers.

Nearly every man of the miners were in sympathy with Young Wild West and his friends, and they would have fought for them if it was necessary.

So when they heard Brown say it was all right, and that he had no hard feelings against the boy, they took it for granted that he meant it.

He had treated them all when he came to the camp half an hour before our friends arrived, and that made them think he was a pretty good sort of a fellow.

Not that they were dependent upon anyone for their drinks, for the miners of Silver Boom were all pretty flush just about then.

Things were going with a hurrah, and money was plentiful.

"This is a pretty good sort of a camp, I think," remarked Brown, as he settled the bill. "Is there much doing around here?"

He looked over at the two card-tables that were in the room as he spoke.

"Oh, there's a little game goin' on ther most of ther time, I reckon," was the reply. "Ever do much at draw poker?"

"It's the greatest game there is, I think. I like it."

One of the miners pricked up his ears at this.

He went by the name of Big Zack, and he had the reputation among the miners of Silver Boom of being the boss card-sharp.

The eyes of the saloonkeeper turned to him, and those of Ben Brown followed the gaze.

Now, it so happened that there were two or three there

who believed that Big Zack's winnings was caused by an extraordinary streak of luck.

Two of them were just itching to get in a game with him, thus hoping to get back from him what they had lost the night before.

"Wanter play?" the big gambler asked, looking at the two and nodding.

"Yes," was the reply from both.

"And I will play, too," spoke up Brown. "That is, if you have no objections."

"Sartin' we ain't got no objections. Ain't there another of yer what wants ter play? A five-handed game is all right, I reckon."

There was no doubt, by their actions, that all the six who had come with Brown to the camp were willing to play, but a sharp glance at them from their leader made them keep still.

So the four selected one of the tables and sat down.

"We ain't got no chips here, so you'll have ter play with real money," explained the keeper of the saloon. "Every jack-pot means a round of drinks ter be paid fur by ther winner."

"That is fair enough," answered Brown, just as though he was not thoroughly acquainted with the way poker was played in the saloons of the mining camps. "Do you count straights?"

The last was said to Big Zack.

"No," was the reply. "Four aces is ther winnin' hand ther way we play here."

"All right. There is nothing like knowing just what sort of a game you are going to play before you begin."

"We'll play ther regular game," said one of the miners, who had dropped in. "If a feller kin win by bluffin', let him do it. No limit, an' when a man's broke he ain't allowed ter borryer from anyone in ther game."

"All right," nodded Brown.

"That's ther only real way ter play draw poker," Big Zack added, with a grin on his homely visage.

They cut for deal, and the miner sitting to the left of Big Zack won.

Then Brown, who, by the way, was a professional card-sharp, up to all the cheating that was known in the great Western gambling game, put up his ante.

It was only a dollar, and the result was that the other three looked at each other and grinned.

But nothing was said, and as the man next to Brown placed a ten-dollar bill on the board and remarked that it would cost eleven dollars to draw cards, he seemed surprised.

"You gentlemen play a pretty stiff game," he observed, innocently.

"This ain't very stiff," answered Big Zack. "You oughter see us last night. There was over two thousand dollars on ther table in one jack-pot."

"Is that so? I don't know as I could stay in a game of that kind very long. I haven't over a thousand dollars with me."

The miner card-sharp smiled faintly.

It was evident that he had made up his mind at that very moment to get hold of that thousand dollars as quickly as he could.

But he did not know his man, though he should have been suspicious of the stranger, for he was just the cut of the professional gambler to be found throughout the West.

The cards were dealt, and no one said anything for a minute.

"Jack-pot," said the big man.

"I've got a pair, but I'm agreeable," answered Brown.

The other nodded, so the cards were thrown down.

It was the gambler's deal now, and picking up the cards, he shuffled them carefully, as though he was afraid he was not doing it well.

But in reality he was fixing them to suit him.

He laid them down, and the man at his right cut them.

There was just forty-four dollars on the board now, which was a small sum for that part of the country.

Brown carefully dealt the cards around.

One miner looked at his hand and found that he had a pair of jacks.

That was sufficient to open the pot, so he did so, laying down a fifty-dollar bill.

The miner next to him had three tens, so he went right along



Big Zack had a pair of aces, so he simply jumped at the chance to go in.

Brown looked his hand over after the fashion of a novice.

He remained in a study for a few seconds and then observed:

"Well, I may as well go in, too. There is no telling but I might draw something worth while."

The fact was that the villain knew just what his opponents had, for he was very slick with the cards, and he had dealt them all hands that would open a jack-pot.

He knew just how many cards each would draw, too, though to look at him just then it would seem that he was studying solely his own hand.

He only had a pair of trays.

"Three cards," said the man on his left, as he picked up the deck to give them the number they called for.

He gave the man the three cards, and as one of them was a jack, he had three, or enough to make him think he had a good chance.

The other man took two, and got enough to make him a full hand.

Big Zack received an ace and a pair of deuces, making his a full hand, also, and the best hand of the three.

But the cards that Brown drew were two trays and an ace, making him have four trays.

He studied his hand as he looked it over, and though the others watched his face they could not tell whether he had bettered himself much or not.

That was the part of it that made him a success at the game.

Though he could put up the cards and deal what he wanted to the men who played with him, he had a way about him that made him appear innocent.

The man who had opened the jack-pot bet ten dollars.

The other miner raised it ten, and then Big Zack lifted it fifty on the strength of his ace-full.

Brown pondered for a moment, and went him a hundred better.

Both miners promptly dropped out.

They figured it that the stranger could not be bluffing, and they made up their minds to let the pot go.

But Big Zack was a much better player than they were.

He knew he stood a show of winning, providing the cards had been dealt straight, and he thought they had.

An ace-full is not beaten every day.

"A hundred more," he said, looking at Brown and grinning, as though he regarded the whole thing as a joke.

"A hundred more than you," was the reply, and the money was put up.

Big Zack hesitated.

"I'll call yer," he finally said, and he put down the money and placed his elbows on the table, his eyes fixed on the gentlemanly stranger.

"Well, I was lucky enough to draw two more trays—I had two to go in with, you know."

"Thunder! You win all right, an' I've got as putty a full hand as yer are apt ter see in a dog's age!"

Brown coolly raked in the money, and stuffed it in his pockets.

At this juncture who should come in but Cheyenne Charlie and Hop Wah, the Chinaman.

The scout was keeping his promise to buy a drink for the Celestial.

They stepped to the bar, and soon got what they wanted.

Then Hop walked softly to the card table.

Big Zack had swallowed his surprise, and was shuffling the cards to deal for another hand.

"Me likee play poken," said the Chinaman, looking at the players in his innocent, childish way.

They all looked at him, the big miner holding the cards still in his hand.

"You'd like ter play, hey?" he blurted out. "Have yer got any money?"

"Me gottee lilee money," was the reply. And then Hop showed a good-sized roll with a few hundred-dollar bills in it.

The eyes of Ben Brown sparkled and he looked at the Chinaman in a queer sort of a way for a moment.

"Sit down," he said. "We'll make a five-handed game of it."

The two miners were agreeable, of course, so Hop sat down, the others moving up for him.

Cheyenne Charlie grinned and lighted a cigar.

He was perfectly satisfied that there was no one there who could beat the Celestial at that particular game.

Experience had taught him that.

As has been stated, Hop Wah was one of the most innocent-looking of his race.

No one would have taken him for an expert gambler.

But he was, just the same.

Big Zack did not offer to have another cut for deal, but went right on shuffling the cards.

Hop got a seat on his right, so he would be the last to deal when it went around.

One of the miners explained the way they were playing the game and Hop nodded, acting very much as though anything would suit him, which was really the fact.

Ten dollars was the ante this time, and when the cards went around all went in.

The shrewd Hop picked out the man who had called himself Brown as being the one to look out the most for, as he had seen him take in the last pot as he came in the saloon.

If Brown's face could not be studied, Hop's certainly could not.

He was too innocent to play cards, so the two miners thought.

The rest of the men in the place crowded around the table.

Hop played just like the greenest kind of a greenhorn, and lost fully two hundred dollars by the time it came for him to deal.

Then he settled down to win it back, and more with it.

Brown had been the lucky one, he winning three pots out of the five.

The two miners were the victims, so far, but they were game, and meant to win or lose all they had.

As money was plentiful there, they would only have to work a few days to get more.

As Hop started to deal Young Wild West and Jim Dart came in.

Our hero did not seem to be surprised at seeing the Chinaman at the table, and as he said nothing to him Hop went right ahead.

## CHAPTER V.

### HOP WAH SHOWS A TRICK IN MAGIC.

Young Wild West and Jim Dart had noticed that it was very quiet in the saloon, so they had decided to go over and see what was going on there.

There was not the least danger of the girls being interfered with, and as our hero wanted to find out all he could about the men he suspected of being the road agents, he was anxious to get down to the real business that would result in restoring to Arietta her watch.

Wild bought cigars for himself and Jim, and then walked over and joined the spectators.

Hop dealt out the cards and laid down the pack.

There was an ante of ten dollars and a "blind" of ten more up, which made it cost each man twenty dollars to draw cards.

Hop looked at his hand and smiled in his simple way.

He had dealt himself the four aces of the pack, cold, as they call it in gambling terms.

He had also given Ben Brown two kings, and he had two more ready for him when he drew cards.

What the rest got he did not keep track of.

He only knew that he could deal the two kings to the man he wanted them to go to, and that was all he cared about.

They all came in, for none of them were without a pair, it happened.

That made just a hundred dollars on the board, when Hop had met the ante and "blind."

Brown drew only two cards, which Hop thought rather strange, since he knew he held a pair of kings.

But gamblers sometimes hold a side card, so he did not bother his head about it.

He was going to win the pot, anyhow.

One of the miners made a bet of five dollars, showing that he did not have a very strong hand, or that he was trying to lead the others on.

Hop smiled blandly as he saw the next man raise it to ten. Then he looked serious when Brown made it a hundred



Big Zack uttered an exclamation of disgust and threw down his hand.

He only had two small pair, and he was not going to risk such a hand with Brown in the game, for he had decided that he was a whole team at draw poker.

Hop met the raise, and lifted it another hundred.

The two miners promptly dropped out.

"So it is only the Heathen Chinese I have to buck me, eh?" remarked Brown. "Well, John, I am going to give you a run for your money."

"Me no namee John; me namee Hop Wah," said Hop, a little testily.

"All right, Hop Wah. Well, here goes! How does that strike you?"

He put down three hundred dollars, making it a raise of two hundred.

"Me no undelstand um dlaw pokee muchee, but me t'inkee you bluffee," observed Hop, smilingly. "Me havee laisee 'nother huddled."

And he did raise it, too.

"It may be that you are smarter than you look to be, and that you are bluffing, instead of me," said Brown. "How does this hit you? Do you still think I am bluffing?"

He put out six hundred dollars in big bills.

"You laisee five huddled dollee!" exclaimed Hop, as though that was too much for him.

"That is just the size of it, John Chinaman."

"Me no John Chinaman; me Hop Wah. Me allee samee Melican man; me workee for Young Wild West, and me play dlaw pokee allee samee Melican man."

"Well, let it go at that, then," and the gambler cast a glance of uneasiness at our hero, who stood opposite him, his arms folded across his broad chest.

Hop smiled, sweetly this time, and pulled out all the money he had with him.

There was more than a thousand dollars in the pile, and as he began counting it out Ben Brown turned pale, while a murmur of surprise went up from the lookers-on.

"Hold on!" exclaimed the gambler. "Do yer want ter call me?"

"You callee me," was the retort, as Hop put down a thousand dollars. "Me winnee, or me losee allee me got."

Brown hesitated.

The fact was that he only had just about enough to make the call.

He was plainly worried, and he looked his hand over, as though he was trying to make the four kings he had in cease in value.

There was only one possible hand to beat him in that kind of a game, and it was possible that the Chinaman might hold it.

He decided to call him, so putting down the required amount he nerved himself for what was to come, be it good or bad, and said:

"What have you got?"

"Me gottee four lillie aces!" was the calm rejoinder, and Hop laid them down, so everybody could see them, and raked in the pile of money.

It is more than likely that if Young Wild West and his partners had not been there trouble would have ensued, for the gambler was nearly broke.

But he swallowed his defeat without a word and got up from the table.

"I am done for the present," he said, slowly. "But I will meet you again, John Chinaman."

"Misl'er Hop Wah my name," corrected the Celestial.

Then he looked around and picked up the cards.

"I reckon yer got bit putty hard that time," observed Big Zack, grinning at Brown, as he arose from the table. "I ain't no fool, an' I don't mind tellin' yer that I'm a putty good one with a deck of cards. I soon found that you was better'n me, though; an' now I'm dead sartin that ther heathen kin double-discount you. I've got enough cash left ter treat, so everybody come an' have somethin'!"

That ended the card game.

Young Wild West knew quite well that Hop must have cheated the gambler, but as he knew Brown had been up to the same game himself he decided to let it go.

Whenever he found the Celestial winning from an innocent man he always made him give back his winnings, for he knew Hop could not play a square game.

Ben Brown took a drink with the big miner, and then turned and talked in low tones with his six followers for a minute or two.

The result was that they all went out, and taking their horses by their heads, led them over to a vacant spot near the creek.

They went in camp here, which showed that they meant to stay in the mining camp a while longer.

Turning to Big Zack, our hero said:

"I guess those fellows came here to make their living by gambling. I can tell pretty well what a man is, and Brown looks to be a professional gambler. I advise you to quit playing with them."

"I reckon that's putty good advice, Young Wild West," was the reply. "I kin stand what I lost this mornin', all right. I'm mighty glad that ther Chinese took ther boodle ther galoot had, though. I couldn't have got it, I know, an' if he hadn't dropped inter ther game jest as he did I reckon me an' ther other two galoots would have been cleaned out. I did call myself ther king-pin at poker in this here camp, but I won't any more. Ther Chinese kin play all around me."

"An' so kin ther other chap, Zack," spoke up one of the victims.

"Yes, that's right. But you ain't deuce-high at ther game."

"I know it, but I'll play you some time when I git better acquainted with ther cards. We've all got ter learn, yer know."

"And pay well for learning," added Jim Dart.

Hop was looked upon with considerable favor since he had shown what he could do with the cards.

He was just in the humor to give a little performance in the way of magic.

"Me show Melican mans nicee lillie tlick," he said, as he put down a glass, after swallowing a stiff horn of tangle-foot, as he always called the liquor sold in mining camps.

"Go ahead!" exclaimed Big Zack. "If yer kin show us any better trick than what yer jest played on that cardsharp I'll treat ter ther best Havana cigars Bill Jagg has got in his shanty."

"Allee light."

Hop got ready for business.

The first thing he did was to pull out a big yellow silk handkerchief.

It was one he always carried, and he never used it for anything but in the performance of his magic.

Walking over to the table, he picked up the cards they had been playing with, and carefully shuffled them.

"You pickee outtee card," he said to the big miner.

"Allee right," answered Big Zack. "I reckon I've seen ther trick before, but I'll do it jest ter please yer, an' them what ain't seen it."

Hop only smiled at this.

The card the man picked out was the jack of clubs.

He let everyone in the room see it but the Chinaman.

"Now you puttee um card in um pack," said Hop.

This the miner did.

Then Hop carefully wrapped the pack in the big handkerchief—or he seemed to—and this done he placed it on the table.

"Now me likee havee hat lillie while," the Celestial said, smiling at Big Zack.

"All right; here she is," and off came the big brown sombrero.

"Lookie in, so um see no cards in um."

"Oh, there ain't no cards in my hat. I don't play poker that way."

He held it up, so everybody could see that it was as he declared, and then Hop took the hat.

He placed it over the handkerchief and pack of cards, talking a lot of nonsense meanwhile, and then stood up and looked at the ceiling for a moment in silence.

"Takee um hat," he said, suddenly.

The miner obeyed.

"Puttee on um headee," went on the Celestial, hurriedly.

This was done, too.

Then those looking on noticed that there was a card sticking in the band of the hat.

It was the jack of clubs!

"How in thunder did that git there?" Big Zack cried, when his attention had been called to it.

"Velly stlange," answered Hop, smiling blandly.

"I should say it was strange. Why, I didn't see yer put it there."

Hop shook his head.

"Me no puttee card in um pack," he declared



Then he picked up the handkerchief and shook it out before the eyes of all hands.

The pack of cards had vanished.

"Thunder!" ejaculated the big miner.

Hop calmly took the card from his hat.

Then he stepped back and told him to take off his coat.

"What do yer want me ter do that fur?" Zack asked.

"Me wantee findee um cards."

"Yer don't think I've got 'em under my coat, do yer?"

Off came the coat as quickly as he could get it from him, and down upon the floor fell the pack of cards.

Cries of surprise, followed by a burst of laughter, went up from the miners.

It was all very mystifying to them, but the expression on the face of Big Zack as he looked at the cards on the floor was too much for them, and they simply gave way to merriment.

Hop calmly gathered up the cards.

Then he sorted them over and took the jack of clubs from them.

Walking over to a corner of the room, he stuck the card on a protruding nail.

"Misler Wild," said he, looking at our hero, "you shootee um heads off um jackee."

"Anything to help you along with your magic, Hop," was the reply.

Then Wild drew his revolver and two shots went from it.

Both heads on the card had bullets through them.

The Chinaman calmly took the card from the nail, and after showing it to all hands, put it back in the pack.

He shuffled the cards, and then asked Big Zack to find the card that had the bullet holes through it.

The miner leafed over the pack, but it was not there.

The jack of clubs was there, however, but it showed no signs of having been shot at.

This only added more mystery to what the Celestial had shown them.

"Lat velly nicee tlick," he said, with a childish grin.

Then they all wanted to treat him, but Wild needed him to put the camp in shape, so he told them that Hop would show them something more in the line of magic later on.

As our friends went out they saw that a wagon train was just coming into the camp.

The wagons were loaded with lumber, provisions, general supplies, and barrels of liquor.

"Ther boomers has come!" shouted Big Zack, waving his hat. "Now ter see Silver Boom take a jump!"

"It does look like business," said Wild. "Hello! Ben Brown has stopped them. I wonder what he is up to?"

He watched long enough to see the villain buy a wagon-load of lumber and pay for it with money he got from his companions.

"I guess he means to settle here all right," he said to his partners.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE GAMBLERS MAKE A ROUSING GOOD START.

"Boys," said Ben Brown, when they came to a halt on the bank of the creek, "I guess we'll hang up here for a while. We must locate here in Silver Boom, you know, if we expect to carry on our business in the proper way. Here we will be known as the gamblers, and somewhere else——"

"Ther road agents," added one of the men, quickly.

"That's right, Sparrow; if we can't clean up a thousand dollars a day, on an average, while we stay here I'll just miss my calculations, that's all."

"There ain't enough galoots here ter do much at gamblin', though," another of the villains said. "I reckon we'll do more on ther trail than we will with ther cards in this camp."

"Don't worry about that. There will be lots of people here in less than a week. Why, there is a crowd of boomers on the way here now. I did think of holding them up a few miles back from here, but on second thought I concluded to let them get here. There is lots of money in circulation here, and the more men there are here the more there will be of it. We will get our share, for there are always plenty of galoots to play draw poker with—they all seem anxious to lose their money, too. Just leave it to me, boys; I'll fix things so we will get all that is coming to us."

The fact was that the band of seven outlaws had heard about the boom at the new mining camp, and they had come

there for the express purpose of swindling the miners out of the money, and to do a business on the trail between times.

They had not been there long when they saw a wagon train approaching.

"The boomers are coming now, boys!" exclaimed Brown, pointing to the new arrivals.

"As sure's you're born, they are!" echoed the man called Sparrow, who, by the way, appeared to be a sort of lieutenant of the gang.

"Jove! They've got lumber and boards there! I wonder if we can't buy enough to put up a shanty? We could get the boards we wanted of them if they'll sell, and there is plenty of trees to be cut down to make the frame of the shanty. Boys, I am going to try them. I am about broke myself, but I guess there is money enough in the crowd to buy what we need. We'll start a gambling-house of our own here."

The six men were pleased at this proposition.

"Go ahead an' make a bargain, cap," said one.

As the wagon-train came up Brown hailed the driver of a big wagon that was loaded with rough boards.

"Want to sell that load?" he asked.

"I reckon I kin sell if I get enough money," was the reply.

"I brought along about twice as much lumber as I needed, jest fur ther purpose of findin' customers. There is them in ther crowd here what wants ther stuff, but I'm out ter make money. You pay more than they will an' you kin have it."

"I'll give you a thousand dollars for two loads of the stuff, providing you furnish the nails to put it up in a shanty."

"Done!" cried the driver, who happened to be the owner himself.

It did not take long for Brown to get the money from his followers.

It was paid over, and then men began to unload the lumber right where he told them to.

In less than an hour later the whole seven of them were at work putting up a shanty.

The boomers went into camp in various parts of the mining place, and as there were about thirty men among them, they made a big addition to Silver Boom.

Some of them had their wives and children with them, and they had all come there for the purpose of making money.

Ben Brown knew that the quicker he got his shanty erected the better it would be for him, so he sought the services of half a dozen men, agreeing to pay them at the rate of ten dollars a day.

They were willing to work, for the most of them had very little cash, and as foodstuffs were high, they needed a little start.

The result was that the shanty began going up in a hurry.

While it was being erected Brown went around among his men and collected enough to buy a barrel of whisky.

"We want to open up in good style, boys," he said. "I will have a faro table and a roulette outfit over from Cheyenne inside of a week, and you can just bet we will make things hum in this new camp!"

It was a good-sized shanty that the gamblers were putting up.

They meant to make it pay for itself in a very few days, if possible, so they thought they might as well have the best that could be built with the material that was at hand.

By the time darkness came around the shanty was all framed, and the men were putting the roof and sides on.

Ben Brown thought he could open up business, so he did so.

He had no difficulty in buying three oil-lamps of the boomers, for the most of them were willing to sell anything they had, providing they got the price they asked for it.

The next thing he wanted was a long strip of canvas that would do for a sign, and some paint.

The gambler got both in short order.

The canvas was stretched out as soon as he had eaten his supper, and while one of the villains held the lamp Brown quickly painted on the canvas the legend:

"THE SQUARE DEAL HOUSE."

"B. Brown, Prop."

"I reckon that looks fine, cap," said Sparrow, admiringly. "You sartinly kin make letters quick with a brush, an' yer make 'em jest in ther right style, too."



"Oh, that is easy enough, Sparrow," was the retort. "I always was pretty good at lettering and drawing. It came natural to me when I was attending school in the little Ohio Schoolhouse years ago."

"Was you born in Ohio, cap?" asked the villain's lieutenant.

"Yes; about ten miles outside of Toledo."

"Well, I was born in that State, too; but it was down near ther Ohio river. My father was a mighty rich man, but when ther war come he was cleaned out. He j'ined ther Confederate army after that, an' was shot. My mother didn't live long after that, an' then ther first thing I knowed I found myself in ther poor-house. I was only seven years old, but I was old enough ter know that ther poor-house wasn't no place fur me, so one night, after I'd been there about a year, I sneaked away an' got on a freight train that was bound fur ther West. I stole grub from a grocery store ter take along with me, which was ther first time I ever took anything that didn't belong ter me."

"It wasn't the last, though, was it, Sparrow?" queried the captain, with a chuckle.

"I reckon not, cap. But, as I was a-sayin', I come as fur as El Paso, Texas, on that freight-train—fer I jest stuck ter one car, 'cause ther train hands found me afore I'd gone fur, an' they took pity on me, an' allowed that I could go as fur as ther blamed old freight was goin', after they'd heard my story. From El Paso I drifted ter a ranch, an' it was there I growed up. I got ter be very bad, cap. I was one of ther worst in them parts, they said, so I had ter light out an' I come ter Cheyenne. It was there I met you, an' since that time we've been gittin' along mighty good together. There's worse fellers than I are fur a chum, I reckon, cap."

"You are right, Sparrow. You and I will always be fast friends. Your story reminds me of my own life, only that I did not strike out for the Far West as young as you did. I held a responsible position five years ago, but I was not satisfied with the money I made at it; I had to gamble. I lost more than I had of my own, and soon I had squandered a few thousands that belonged to my employers. It was time for me to quit and light out, so I did. I then decided to be a first-class gambler, and I stuck to it until I got so I could handle the cards with the best of them. That Chinaman got the best of me to-day, but he is the first one who has been able to do that trick in over a year. I want to stack up against him again, just to see if I can learn anything from him. I don't bear the fellow any grudge because he took my money from me. He got it without me being able to catch him doing anything crooked, and you know he must be a mighty good one to be able to do that."

"I know that, cap. I'm a putty good one myself, an' I would have laughed at ther chance ter git a whack at ther heathen. But what would he have done ter me?"

"Well, he couldn't do any more than break you, and that is what he did to me."

The two laughed, and then walked out to put the sign up on the high false front that had been built up to make the building look as though a two-story affair from the street, or road, as it might better be called.

It was one of the quickest built shanties of its size that had gone up in Silver Boom, for though it was not finished, business could be done in it.

The floor had been laid, but the roof and sides were not completed.

Brown could only get hold of half a dozen tumblers, and these he put on the two boards that were set upon barrels to form a bar.

One of the oil lamps was hung outside, and the other two, which were bracket lamps, were put up inside.

There was an enormous profit in whisky at fifty cents a drink, and Brown figured that it was a good game he had started.

While the business was going at its full height the man he had bought the lumber of came in, followed by a couple of his friends.

"You're a hustler," he said to Brown. "Give us a little tanglefoot; I reckon I ought ter patronize your shanty, since I sold yer ther stuff ter build it."

"You will drink at my expense," replied the gambler. "I appreciate what you did for me, though I know you got well paid for the lumber. I am going to make things hum here."

He gave the man, who said his name was Collins, a rousing good drink, and his friends, as well.

Then he insisted on giving them another.

"I reckon I'll pay fur ther next one," said Collins.

"No, you won't," was the reply.

So they had another at the expense of the owner of the new place.

The result was that the three boomers got pretty well under the influence of liquor.

There was nothing strange about this, since they had visited the other saloon two or three times during the day.

Sparrow and two others, who were handy with tools, had been busy putting up some rough tables, nailing them to the side of the shanty.

These were to be used as temporary card tables.

They were just about done now—three of them—and the gamblers started to playing.

They were bound to draw others in the games, and before long each of the tables had from four to six men sitting around it.

Two of the gamblers were at each, having it arranged between themselves to fleece the others out of their money.

When two expert card-players play "partners" in a poker game the rest, if they are trying to play square, had better quit.

Ben Brown had all he could do to take care of the bar that night.

He could not get the chance to play cards at all.

The three boomers, who had been treated in such a liberal way by him, soon lost more than they could afford to at the cards.

But Collins was what they call "game," and he stuck at it until he lost the entire amount of money that Brown had paid him for the lumber.

Then he managed to stagger to his camp to go to sleep.

In the morning he would realize what a fool he had been.

It must have been three o'clock in the morning before the last man left the new saloon.

Already some of the gamblers were snoring away in one end of the shanty.

Sparrow was very jubilant.

He had remained quite sober, and his winnings were enough to elate him.

"Put out the lights, Sparrow," said Brown, as they got the last man from the place. "I guess we have done enough for one night. How did you and the boys make out? I have been so busy getting rid of whisky that I haven't had a chance to keep much of a line on what you were doing?"

"Everything's lovely," was the reply, as the villain put out the light outside. "I guess you'll be surprised when we count up."

"Well, I am too tired to do that to-night. We'll wait till morning. This is the hardest day's work I have put in since I was a boy."

Sparrow leaned over and lowered his voice to a whisper.

"There's more boomers due to-morrer," he said. "There is a galoot named Stephens among 'em what's got a big pile of money. He's comin' here ter buy up all ther best claims, if he kin git ther owners ter part with 'em. We want this here Stephens, don't we, cap?"

"That's right," was the reply. "The road agents will have to tackle him, I guess. Greg Green hasn't done any business since he got the nice little gold watch from Young Wild West's sweetheart. You bet we will be on hand for Stephens, Sparrow!"

The two villains then turned in.

They were the last to do so, and they did not appear to think it necessary to keep a watch.

Surely the gamblers had started off well in Silver Boom.

But how they were to wind up was another thing.

## CHAPTER VII.

### WILD'S THEORY IS PROVEN TO BE CORRECT

Young Wild West and his friends fixed up their camp to their liking, and remained pretty quiet the rest of the day.

They saw what the gamblers were doing, of course, but they did not go near them to interfere with their work.

Wild was positive that Ben Brown and his men were the road agents that had been spoken of by the villain who had robbed Arietta of her watch, but since she had failed to recognize any of them as the one who had done it he was simply waiting to get a clue to work on before he went for them.



He wanted to get hold of the man who had sold the lumber to the gamblers, and have a talk with him, for he knew that by having dealings with them, the man would be likely to have some idea of what they were.

But it was not until the next morning that he got a chance to talk to Collins.

He found the man sitting on the bank of the creek when he got up, and by the looks of him, he was very much worried.

"Good-morning," said Wild, cheerily.

Collins looked up.

Then he arose to his feet.

"You're Young Wild West, ain't yer?" he asked.

"That is just who I happen to be, my friend."

"Did yer ever have a good look at a downright fool, Young Wild West?"

"What makes you ask me that question?" Wild answered.

"Because I'm ther identical downright fool."

"How do you make that out?"

"Well, I'll tell yer. See that new shanty over there, what was put up yisterday in sich a hurry?"

"Yes, I see it."

"Well, I sold two wagon-loads of lumber ter them galoots, an' I got a mighty good price fur ther stuff, too. I wasn't satisfied with that, so I went there last night an' got ter drinkin'. That galoot named Brown is a slick article. He wouldn't let me an' my pards pay fur anything, an' ther first thing we knowed we was playin' poker there."

"Ah, I guess I know what is coming."

"I reckon yer do. Well, ter make a long story short, them galoots has got ther lumber, an' ther money they paid fur it, too."

"I am not surprised to hear that," said Wild, who could not help smiling at the man. "You should have known better. Haven't you learned to size up a man yet?"

"I thought I had. That Ben Brown was jest about one of ther nicest galoots I ever met. But it wasn't him what took ther money from me an' my pards; he jest got us good an' drunk, an' then his pals done it. I kin see through it all now. But my! don't my head ache!"

"You shouldn't drink so much whisky. It would be a great deal better for you if you didn't drink any at all."

"I know that. But a man would go plumb off his base if he didn't git a jag aboard once in a while. There's too much sameness about ther minin' camps of ther West."

"Well, I manage very well to get along without drinking any of it. I always find something to keep me awake, too."

"I reckon yer do, Young Wild West. But I feel better, now that I've told some one what a fool I am."

"What a fool you was last night, you mean."

"Well, let it go that way, then. I bought enough lumber ter make some money when I got here, an' I made more'n I expected ter make, but what good did it do me? I jest turns around an' hands it back ter ther galoots what give me ther money! If ever a galoot ought ter be kicked it's me!"

"Well, it can't be helped, I suppose," Wild answered, with a smile. "You will have to get in and hustle, that's all. Build your shanty on the claim you stake out, and then get in and work."

"I reckon I'd better go an' git my breakfast, an' then strike out ter find a claim that'll suit me. There's more boomers due here afore noon to-day. One of 'em is a galoot named Stephens, an' he's comin' here ter buy up some of ther good claims, so's he kin git a monopoly on their minin' business in this here place."

He must have plenty of money if he expects to do that," Wild answered. "Did you tell any one else that Stephens is coming, and that he has got plenty of money?"

"Yes, I believe I did tell it ter Ben Brown last night, or some of his gang, I don't know which. I'm sartin I told 'em about it, though. I know! It was ther galoot what's got ther name of Sparrer what I told it to. He 'peared ter be mighty glad ter hear that sich a money-man was comin'. They'll be gittin' him ter play poker afore he's been here very long, an' then they'll git his money away from him."

"That's so," our hero observed.

But it occurred to Wild just then that perhaps the gamblers would not wait for the boomers to get to the camp before they made a try for the money Stephens was supposed to have.

Collins walked off in a few minutes, and then Wild went back to the camp.

The two Chinamen were busy getting the breakfast ready, and Charlie and Jim were cleaning up their weapons.

The girls were not out of their tent yet, though they could be heard stirring.

"Boys, I guess we'll take a little ride out along the trail by and by," said Wild to his partners.

"Anything up?" asked Jim.

"I think there will be something up," was the reply.

"I hope there is," spoke up the scout. "I'd jest like ter git a good chance at them gamblers, though."

"Well, you may have the chance. I just heard that there are some more boomers due to arrive some time this morning, and that there is a man among them named Stephens, who has a big pile of money with him. The gamblers know this, and if they really are the road agents the chances are that some of them will be riding out to hold up the boomers somewhere along the trail."

"That's so!"

"So we will just keep a watch on the brand-new shanty, and if any of the gamblers mount and leave we will know that it is up to us to follow them. If I can find out that these men are road agents I am going to openly accuse Ben Brown of stealing Arietta's watch; and you can bet that he'll either give it up in a hurry, or that something will happen!"

"Yer kin bet he will, Wild!" exclaimed the scout.

The shanty was less than a hundred yards from where our friends had pitched their camp, so they could easily see what was going on there, though there were two or three between it and them.

All they had to do was to step down near the edge of the creek once in a while, and they could see the horses belonging to the gamblers tied to trees near the creek.

Wing, the cook, soon had the coffee going over the fire, and then he proceeded to boril some venison and fry some bacon in a pan.

Our friends had shot nearly a dozen young sage-hens the day before, and these were all ready to fry in the bacon grease.

Wing knew how to fry them, too.

It was not more than three-quarters of an hour before the Chinaman announced that breakfast was ready.

The girls had been up some time, and had turned to and assisted the cook.

Anna had a great way of making what she called a "pan of biscuits," and she had them ready when they sat down.

She did this with the aid of a covered pan. She placed the pan in the fire and heaped red-hot coals upon it.

In this way the biscuits would cook the same as if they were in an oven.

The only difficulty about it was that the heat might be too strong and burn the biscuits. But she had it down so fine that she seldom made a mistake.

They ate as good a breakfast as could be obtained in a hotel, and they felt all the more pleased over it, because it was cooked right before their eyes.

It was not until after the meal was over that they saw any signs of the gamblers leaving.

Charlie was on the watch, and when he noticed that three of them were getting their horses saddled he called Wild and Jim.

The rest of the men were finishing the work on the shanty, with the assistance of half a dozen men that Brown had hired.

The work would all be done by night, by the way it looked.

"Well, if there are only three of them going I guess we can take charge of them, Charlie," said our hero. "Jim, you will have to stay here and be on hand in case there is any interference with the girls."

"Ail right," answered Dart, who was always ready to do what the dashing young deadshot said.

Wild and Charlie waited until they saw the three gamblers mount their horses and ride off.

One of them was Brown, and that made it look as though they were going out on the trail to meet the boomers and hold up the man who was supposed to have so much money with him.

They soon saddled their horses, and then riding down along the creek a short distance, they turned and went around the camp and struck the trail.

Of course, they made sure to know which way the three villains had gone first.

"I reckon there's ther hoof-prints of ther horses they're ridin'," said Charlie, pointing them out on the soft ground. "They're ther only ones what's gone this way this mornin'; that's easy ter tell."

"That's right," nodded our hero.



They rode along at an easy gait, for they did not want to overtake the three villains and spoil their game.

Wild was dead certain that he was right in his opinion that Ben Brown and Gregg Green, the road agent leader, were one and the same person.

Arietta had failed to recognize him as such, but there were plenty of men who could change their voices enough to deceive any one.

Our hero figured it that the villain must have spoken in a disguised tone of voice when he was talking to Arietta and Hop.

He had seen enough of the villain to know that he was a pretty clever sort of a man.

They rode along at an easy canter until they reached the trail where it branched off to Elkhorn.

Then Wild and Charlie came to a halt.

It was lucky that they did so, for just then they heard the sounds of approaching hoofs.

Our hero looked around quickly, and saw a convenient place to get in, so they would be out of sight.

He could tell by the sounds that there were not more than two or three horsemen approaching, and that meant that it was most likely Ben Brown and his two companions who were coming.

Wild and Charlie had barely dismounted and led their horses out of sight when they found that what our hero thought was exactly right.

Ben Brown and two of his men rode up and came to a halt but a few yards distant.

Our two friends could tell by their actions that they were waiting for some one to come along.

Wild gave a low chuckle.

He felt that the time had nearly come for him to get back Arietta's watch.

It was only a very few minutes when they heard the sounds made by heavy wagons.

"The boomers are comin'!" exclaimed Charlie, in a low whisper.

"Yes," answered Wild. "They are, sure enough. I wonder if those scoundrels will have the nerve to tackle them?"

"If they do they'll wish they hadn't."

The three gamblers now drew back around a bend in the trail.

The next minute three heavily loaded wagons appeared.

There was a driver to each, while an elderly man rode ahead on the back of a bony mustang.

"That's Stephens, the man with the money, I'll bet!" said Wild.

"Most likely," was the reply.

"But this can't be the whole crowd, can it?"

"There might be more further behind."

Just as the horseman got opposite to where our friends stood behind the bushes three masked men suddenly appeared.

They were the three gamblers.

Cheyenne Charlie raised his rifle.

"Wait!" exclaimed Wild. "We don't want to drop them unless they show that they mean to kill those men."

The scout reluctantly lowered his weapon.

"Hands up! Stand and deliver!" rang out from one of the masked villains.

It was Ben Brown who spoke, but his voice was disguised.

Taken completely by surprise, the drivers of the wagons brought their mule teams to a halt and threw up their hands.

The horseman showed fight, though.

But when he saw the muzzle of a revolver staring him in the face he gave in.

"Now I guess it is about time for us to interfere, Charlie," said our hero.

The next moment dashing Young Wild West and his partner rode out into view.

"Hold up your hands, Gregg Green!" exclaimed Wild, in ringing voice of command.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### WHAT SPARROW DID.

When Sparrow, the gambler, arose after the first night in Silver Boom it was just about the time Young Wild West and his friends were eating their breakfast.

The villain walked down to the creek to take a wash, and while there he got a good look at our friends.

He took particular notice of Arietta, and made up his mind that she was about the prettiest girl he had ever seen.

"I just reckon that I'd like ter win that gal fur a wife," he muttered. "I wonder why it couldn't be done, anyhow? Hanged if I don't ask ther captain what he thinks about it!"

He walked back and met Ben Brown as he came out of the shanty.

"Sparrow," said the latter, "I am going to take two of the men and ride out and meet this fellow they call Stephens. I guess there will be a chance to get his pile away from him, and if there is you can bet that we'll get it."

"I bet yer will, too, cap. But say!"

"What about it, Sparrow?"

"You know ther gal yer took ther watch from?"

"Yes."

"I've jest about fell clean in love with her."

"Nonsense! What makes you talk that way? Don't you know that when a man falls in love he loses about all the sense he ever possessed?"

"I can't help that, cap. I've jest gone an' fell in love with that gal, an' that's all there is ter it! You said you was going ter get square on Young Wild West fur ther way he got ther best of yer yisterday. Now, why can't we steal his gal from him? That would be gittin' square fur fair, I reckon."

"Well, it would, that's so. But where could you take the girl if we did steal her? I guess it would not be such a hard matter to get her, but what could we do with her?"

"I've found a place ter keep her, so that no one will find her, unless I want 'em to, too. It's on ther other side of ther creek. One of ther puttiest hidin' places yer ever seen!"

"Is that so? When did you find it?"

"Yisterday, when I was over there, lookin' fur a tree that would make timber we needed on ther buildin'. I almost fell inter it. Of all ther snug places you ever seen, it's ther best!"

"Well, if Young Wild West should be away from the camp to-night you might try what you can do. I don't care what you do, in fact. I know I am going to have my revenge on Young Wild West before very long. I am just waiting for a good chance. But I am going now. I will leave things in your charge till I come back."

"All right," answered Sparrow.

As soon as Brown and the two men he took with him were gone, Sparrow began to figure on a way to get hold of Arietta.

It was natural that he should keep a watch on the camp of our friends, so when he saw Wild and the scout ride off he decided that it would be a good time to get the girl then.

It never occurred to him that our hero and Charlie were going on the trail of the three who had just left the new shanty.

At any other time Sparrow might have thought that way, but just now his mind was taken up with the pretty girl he wanted to get hold of.

He went down to the creek again, and pulling off his boots, waded across to the other side.

Once there he slipped the boots on, and entered a clump of dense bushes.

Rocks were piled up in fantastic shapes, and the bushes grew from the crevices.

Right at the spot where a tree had been felled the day before a slanting slab of stone rested against the bank.

Sparrow gave a nod of approval when he came to it.

"That hides ther cave all right, I reckon," he muttered. "There ain't a soul what knows about this cave but me. My! but what a good hidin' place it would be fur us all, if we got inter trouble, an' wanted ter hide!"

Peering around to make sure that no one was watching him, he pulled the stone aside.

A circular opening in what appeared to be a crust of rock was disclosed.

It was not dark inside this, either, and when the villain had dropped upon his knees and peered inside the cave, evidently for the purpose of assuring himself that there was nothing in it that would interfere with him, he gave another nod of satisfaction.

Then he crawled in and stood upright in a cave that was fully twenty feet square, and at least nine feet high in most parts of it.

It was lighted through a zig-zag crack that ran through to the face of the rocky bluff that overlooked the creek.

The cave was remarkably dry and devoid of rubbish, and



It was evident that no one had visited it lately, if, in fact, it was known of at all.

"I jest bet if I got that gal here, an' brought her there blindfolded, she'd think she was in some place where she'd never see her friends agin," he muttered. "That would make her give in putty quick an' agree ter be my wife, I reckon. By thunder! if I don't try ter git her here this very mornin'!"

The gambler soon left the cave, and carefully pushing the thin slab over the opening, worked his way through the bushes and went down to the creek.

He was just thinking of pulling off his boots to wade across when he saw something that caused him almost to let out a yell of joy.

Just above, and right near the camp of Young Wild West, he saw the very girl he was so anxious to get hold of fording the creek.

It was Arietta, sure enough, and with her was Anna, while Eloise stood on the bank.

The girls had seen some very pretty flowers growing on the other side, and Arietta declared that she would go and get some of them.

Eloise, being a bit more timid, decided not to try and cross the creek by stepping from stone to stone.

Jim Dart sat near the tents, smoking and watching the girls.

His rifle lay near him, so he was not the least bit afraid that they would run into any danger.

Sparrow took in the whole scene, and when he found that the two girls were really coming across he made up his mind to try and capture Arietta right then.

He set out for the point they were heading for, moving cautiously along, and being careful to keep the rocks and bushes between him and the view of our friends.

Sparrow took off his coat, and then untied a rope from about his waist that he was wearing in lieu of a belt.

"I reckon these two things will do ther trick," he said, under his breath. If I kin git ther coat over her head an' wind ther rope around her neck once, an' then her arms, I'll have ter push ther other one in ther water!"

He got to the point where Arietta and Anna were trying to reach before they got over the creek.

The stones were slippery, and they had to be careful lest they fall and get a wetting.

Arietta was the first to get to the bank, and with a merry laugh she hastened to get the flowers.

Then Anna was unfortunate enough to slip, and down she went into about a foot of water!

Arietta heard her scream, and also the splash, and she turned to go to her aid.

Things could not have turned out better for Sparrow if he had had them made to order.

He leaped forward like a shot, and threw the coat over the girl's head.

She uttered a scream, and then she found herself struggling in the grasp of some one.

The coat was drawn tightly over her head, and then her arms were pinioned.

She tried to cry out again, but she was almost smothering, and could not.

Sparrow certainly caught her as neatly as any girl was caught in her life by a scheming villain.

Picking her up, he started for his cave.

He knew his trail would not be discovered, since there was a very hard piece of ground right there, and the tracks would not show.

The distance not being far, he soon got to the cave.

With his heart beating with joy and excitement at what he had succeeded in accomplishing, the villain threw aside the flat stone and crept into the cave.

Arietta was gasping for breath when he dropped her on the ground in a dark corner.

"I'm a desperate man, miss!" he whispered, hoarsely. "If yer move or cry out I'll surely kill yer!"

With that he left her and ran back to close the entrance.

It was easy enough for him to do this, for the slab was not so very heavy.

But let us turn to Jim Dart just now, and see what he was up to.

Jim saw Anna slip and fall into the water, of course, for he was looking right at her at the time.

He ran to the creek and started to cross at once.

While he had been watching Anna he had failed to see what became of Arietta, and he was puzzled when he found she did not come to the rescue of Anna.

Anna got upon her feet before Jim came to her and climbed out on the bank.

"Et!" she called out.

There was no answer.

"Where are you, Arietta?" she again called.

But, as before, there was no answer.

"Something is wrong, I guess," said Jim, as he hurried across. "I think something must have happened to Arietta, as well as you, Anna."

"Why, what could have happened to her, Jim?" asked Anna, in great surprise.

"That I don't know. But you know as well as I do that she would never act this way if she was all right. She would have been right at your side, helping you out of the water almost as soon as you fell if something was not wrong."

Jim looked up and down that side of the creek.

There was only one way that a person could have gone without being seen, and that was to the right.

He ran into the bushes, revolver in hand.

Almost the first thing he saw was a handkerchief lying on the ground.

It was Arietta's.

In the struggle with her captor she had dropped it, and he had not taken notice of it.

"Ah!" exclaimed Jim, "I guess something has happened to her. Some scoundrel must have been waiting for her here. But he won't get very far! I'll shoot the legs from under him if I catch sight of him."

Then, turning to Anna, he bade her go back across the creek.

"I'll find Arietta," he said. "I'll find her pretty quick, too, for she can't be far away."

Jim hurried through the bushes straight for the point where the villainous gambler had taken the girl.

He had not lost much time in getting across the creek, so he got in sight of the cave just in time to see a pair of hands pull a slab over an opening.

Then he knew that Arietta must be there.

Jim lost no time in getting to that slab of stone.

He listened for a moment, and then he heard a man's voice say:

"There is no use in your yellin', anyhow, but if yer do I'll have ter kill yer, as I said afore. Now I'm goin' ter take that coat off your head an' face, so yer kin breathe a little bit better; but don' yer dare ter holler!"

Dart quietly pulled the stone away and looked into the cave.

Dart was not the least worried but that he could take care of the villain.

"Put vour hands over your head, or you'll be a dead man in less than ten seconds!"

As Jim said this Sparrow turned as though he was shot.

"Thunder!" he cried. "Ther jig is up."

"I guess it is," and Jim walked up smilingly.

Sparrow put his hands above his head and stood perfectly passive.

Jim walked up to him and quickly disarmed him.

Then he ordered him to free Arietta.

Sparrow was glad to do this.

"You miserable scoundrel!" exclaimed Dart, as he walked over to him. "You did a pretty daring thing just now, but you are going to hang for it!"

Sparrow's face turned pale. Then a desperate gleam shone in his eyes.

Suddenly he dropped to the ground and caught one of Jim's ankles and gave it a pull.

Jim was upset and away went the villain for the opening of the cave.

He was crawling through just as Jim raised his revolver to fire.

But the boy did not shoot. He did not want to kill a man while he was in no position to defend himself.

"Let him go for the present," he said.

## CHAPTER IX.

### WILD PLANS TO SURPRISE THE GAMBLERS.

The three gamblers were utterly amazed when Young Wild West and Cheyenne Charlie appeared on the scene.

Wild had taken care to cover the leader, leaving the others to Charlie.

When our hero bade Greg Green, alias Ben Brown, to hold



up his hands, there was no doubt but that he meant what he said.

The masked villain knew he had no chance, so he obeyed.

His two companions swung their horses around and galloped away around the bend that was a short distance away.

Charlie would have shot at them, but Wild told him not to.

The boy was satisfied with having the leader in his power, for he knew that it was he who had Arietta's watch.

The man who had come so near being the victim of the three scoundrels was delighted at the sudden turn of affairs.

"Young fellow, I'll remember you in my will for this," he said, and then he was foolish enough to ride his horse right into the little gap that was between Wild and the gambler road agent.

The stranger wanted to shake hands with his preserver, but he did not stop to think and ride around to the other side of him.

Of course, at the very first instant that our hero's revolver was shut off him the road agent took advantage.

He plunged the spurs into his horse and let out a yell, and then away the animal leaped like a shot.

In his delight the man had caught Wild by both his arms, and he was declaring how much he appreciated his interference when Greg Green darted away.

Wild did not want the villain to escape, so he darted after him, as soon as he could get clear of Stephens, for that was the man's name.

Charlie unslung his rifle and rode out into the middle of the trail.

He was waiting for the escaping road agent to appear further up the trail.

The scout was going to drop him.

Wild rode on, but though he could hear the sounds of the receding hoofs, he could not see the villain.

It occurred to him just then to let him go.

It was not likely that the three villains would think they had been seen before they donned their masks.

That would be apt to make them feel as though they were safe to go back to their shanty.

As Wild turned back Charlie called out to him:

"What's ther matter, Wild? Ain't yer goin' ter catch ther measly coyote?"

"We'll lay for him some other time, Charlie," was the reply.

"I am awful glad you two fellows happened along just as you did!" exclaimed Stephens, riding up close to Wild and trying to grab him again.

"You told me that before," answered the boy, "and if you had not been so eager about it that fellow would not have got away. You might have got shot yourself, too, for you rode right in front of the muzzle of my shooter. I believe your name is Stephens, isn't it?"

"Yes, that's my name!" the man exclaimed, and then he insisted on shaking Wild's hand again.

"You have lots of money with you, too, haven't you?"

"How did you find that out?"

"Well, how do you suppose the road agents found it out? You must have been letting the general public know your business while you were in Cheyenne, Mr. Stephens."

"I must have made a fool of myself, I guess," Stephens admitted.

"Well, it is lucky that some one else didn't interfere with you before you got this far. You didn't leave Cheyenne with these three teams and their drivers, did you?"

"No; there's a whole crowd coming a mile or so behind us. We've been hustling a bit this morning. We started ahead of the rest. This is the outfit I am taking to the new mining camp. I've got about everything a man can want on these wagons. I expect to locate at Silver Boom. I sent a friend over last week to look it over for me, so I know just about what I am going to do when I get there."

"Well, if us two fellows had not come along just as we did the chances are that your calculations would have been upset entirely. That fellow was Greg Green, the road agent. I wanted him pretty bad, because he took a fine watch from a young lady friend of mine yesterday, and I promised her I would get it back for her."

Stephens was now quite cool and sensible.

He realized that he had made a mistake in riding between Wild and the man he had covered, and he now hastened to apologize for it.

"That is all right," answered our hero, with a smile. "I understand human nature pretty well. You could not help

it, I know. We'll let it go at that. I'll catch Greg Green all right, and I'll get the watch, too."

"I glory in your grit, young man! But who are you, anyway? I should like to know your name."

"Young Wild West is my name."

The three drivers had all heard of the dashing young deadshot, and they gave a simultaneous start.

"He's ther champeen deadshot, Mr. Stephens," said one. "It ain't no wonder that he made ther galoots hold up ther hands! He could have dropped ther whole three of 'em afore they could have pulled on him."

"Young Wild West, eh?" mused the wealthy speculator. "Seems to me I have read something about a young fellow by that name."

"That's quite likely," spoke up Cheyenne Charlie. "There's been lots printed about Young Wild West in ther papers."

"You're one of his pards, I reckon?" said the driver, who had just spoken.

"Yes, I'm ther galoot they call Cheyenne Charlie."

"An' where's ther other pard—Jim Dart, I mean?"

"He's over in Silver Boom."

"Good! That's where we want ter git as soon as possible, I reckon. Are yer ready, Mr. Stephens?"

"Yes," was the reply. "If Young Wild West thinks it is advisable to go on I am ready."

"Oh, there is no danger of you being bothered now," answered Wild, quickly. "Come on! We'll ride right along with you."

The teams were then started, and they headed for Silver Boom.

Wild was satisfied that the three villains would show up at the mining camp before long, and that they would not attempt to bother the rest of the boomers that were coming on behind.

He rode along with Charlie and Stephens ahead of the wagons, and in due time the five miles were covered, and they reached the mining camp.

Wild rode right up to the camp where he had left Jim and the girls.

When he got there he was treated to a surprise.

Jim and Arietta were there, having come back from the other side of the creek right after Sparrow made his escape. Our hero was astounded when he heard of what had taken place.

"The scoundrel!" he exclaimed. "To think he would dare to do such a thing right in the open daylight!"

But he did not turn and hasten to the new shanty to punish the villainous gambler.

Wild had decided on a different plan of action.

He did not intend to go there until Ben Brown, alias Greg Green, got back.

That the villain would come back he felt certain.

Charlie was eager to go over to the shanty and have it out with Arietta's abductor.

But he listened to Wild's advice and soon cooled down.

"I was going to wait for him to show up, and then either capture or drop him, but I knew it was not likely that you would want to do anything like that just yet, Wild," said Jim.

"That's right," was the reply. "I am going to let them think that we don't want to interfere with them—or afraid to interfere, if they will go as far as that. Then we'll catch them nicely. The first thing I want to do is to get possession of Arietta's watch."

He then told them what had happened out on the trail, introducing Stephens before he began.

"Et," said he, when he had concluded. "Ben Brown is the man who called himself Greg Green. I know it for a fact, and so does Charlie. He has a way of changing his voice that is really wonderful. He does not know that we are aware that he is the road agent, so that makes it quite certain that he will come back to his shanty before very long."

"What do you propose to do then?" asked Arietta.

"I am going to take you over there, and then I will challenge Brown to a game of draw poker. I will tell him that you are to be the referee, and that you are going to shoot him if you catch him cheating. Charlie and Jim will go, too; and Mr. Stephens, if he desires."

"I'd like to be one of the party, that's certain," replied the speculator. "If you don't mind, I'll camp right here alongside of you."

"There is plenty of room; go ahead."

That was all our hero said about his plans just then.



But his friends knew it would be no use in questioning him further. They knew him too well for that.

As soon as he got settled in camp Stephens took a walk around and got prices on several claims he wanted to buy.

It had leaked out that there was a buyer with plenty of money, so those who were inclined to sell out put big prices on their claims.

Stephens bought three claims that adjoined one another, for all that.

He told Wild that he would buy more, and buy them right before the week was over.

"There is millions in this spot," he declared. "I am going to make a fortune in less than a month."

"I hope you do," was all our hero said.

The day wore on, and though they kept a good watch they saw nothing of the three villains who had been out on the trail, or of Sparrow.

But our hero was confident that they would turn up, so he simply waited.

The rest of the second crowd of boomers had arrived about an hour after Stephens came in.

With them was a young man, who was unquestionably a tenderfoot.

He had joined the party at Cheyenne, and he was out for riches.

His name was John Bader, and he was a nice-looking and well-built young man.

His style of dress made him look out of place in the rough mining camp, but he did not seem to mind it, and he took the jokes that were given out at his expense good-naturedly.

It was rather late in the afternoon when John Bader paid a visit to the gambling-house for the first time.

It was about this time that Wild sent Hop Wah over.

Word had reached his ears that Ben Brown was now in his place of business.

Our hero thought it a good idea to let Hop get in a game with the villain, and then he would drop in with Arietta and the rest.

Hop was of course delighted to have the chance to get among the gamblers.

He had already cleaned out Ben Brown of one lot of money, and he was perfectly confident that he could do it again.

When he walked into the new shanty there was quite a crowd gathered there, for the miners were quitting work, and some of them stopped in to get drinks on their way to their shanties.

Two of the gamblers were tending bar, and Ben Brown was talking earnestly to the tenderfoot.

The fact was that John Bader was inclined to go into all sorts of gambling games.

Like a great many young men, he had an idea that he knew all about cards.

Brown had got enough out of him to know that he had quite a little roll with him, so he thought he would relieve him of it.

He looked around and saw Hop come in, smiling as though he was simply coming into a meeting place of friends.

Brown decided to fleece the Chinaman, as well as the tenderfoot.

He quickly cast a glance at Sparrow, who was now there, too.

Sparrow shook his head.

"S'pose Young Wild West or his pards should come in?" he came up and whispered.

"Pshaw! That fellow did not recognize you when he got the girl away from you. If he had he would have been here red hot looking for you," retorted Brown. "Come on! If anybody accuses you of bothering with a girl, just say that you can prove that you were sleeping at the time. You can easily prove that, you know."

"Yes, I know," was the reply. "But s'pose they won't believe the proof?"

"Well, I reckon ther miners of Silver Boom will give you a square deal. Why shouldn't they, when the evidence is all in your favor. It might be that there is some galoot hanging around that looks something like you."

Sparrow decided that it would be all right to risk it, so he walked over and sat down at a table.

"I invited this roan to join us in a little game," said Brown, looking at the tenderfoot and smiling. "He lost some money playing with me last night, and he is a bit backward about trying it again. But I am a pretty good one with the cards. It is all luck, though, for I always play a straight game."

## CHAPTER X.

## YOUNG WILD WEST'S ROYAL FLUSH.

Then Hop stepped up and took a seat.

"Me like play pokie," observed the Chinaman, looking at the tenderfoot and smiling.

"You bet he does!" exclaimed Brown. "He took all the money I had yesterday. But I guess he had an extraordinary streak of luck. At one time he held four aces against the four kings I had."

"Is that so?" and the tenderfoot grew interested at once.

Hop looked at him innocently.

"Me velly lucky sometimes," he remarked. "Sometimes me not lucky; len me losee."

"I guess that's the way it is with all of us," laughed Bader.

The game began, and for a wonder, both Hop and Brown played square for a while.

It was not until the lamps were lighted that Brown decided to lift a goodly quantity of the tenderfoot's money.

No one had won or lost much, so far, and there had been nothing sensational in the way of hands.

It seemed strange that Hop should decide that it was about made up his mind to get in his fine work.

But Hop had been preparing for what he intended to do for the past ten or fifteen minutes.

He had been keeping the cards that would make a royal flush of hearts.

He now had them all in a sort of pocket in his right sleeve.

Strange as it may appear, Ben Brown forgot about the fact that they were playing straight poker.

It was his deal, and he dealt so that the cards of the larger denomination were scattered among the other three players, and took four nines for himself.

This was quite easy for him to do, since the tenderfoot did not think that here was anything wrong, and Hop was not the one to say anything, if he did see it.

The plan was for Sparrow to keep raising the betting a little at a time, and as the tenderfoot was to hold an ace-full, it was quite likely that he would go right on with them.

Of course, Brown was not sure what Hop had, though he did know that he had given him a full hand.

But what the foxy Chinaman might have when the call was made was another thing.

However, as we have said, Brown had quite forgotten that they had made it up to play straights, and as none had been shown so far, he felt sure that he had the winning hand with four nines.

It looked more plausible to win with four nines than it did with four aces, he thought.

Just as the betting began Young Wild West walked in with Arietta.

Behind him came Charlie and Jim, and then Stephens showed up.

It was not the sort of a place for a girl, the reader might say, but when it is considered that she had come there for the purpose of getting possession of her stolen watch, and to identify the thief, there was ample cause for her presence in the gambling place.

She was not a bit afraid to come there, for she knew that she would be protected from insult by her dashing young lover.

Brown and Sparrow both turned pale when they saw the newcomers.

There was a smile on the face of our hero, and no one would have suspected that he was there for anything more than curiosity.

"We thought we would drop in and see how the new place was getting along," he said.

Brown breathed a sigh of relief, and quickly retorted:

"I'm sorry there ain't room at the table, so you could take a hand, Young Wild West, for I can tell by the look on your face that you'd like to be in the game."

"Well, I guess I'll go in it, anyhow. Hop, how much money have you got in that pot?"

"Ten dollee ante," answered the Chinaman, who was as much surprised as any of the rest.

"All right! Here's ten dollars. I'll take your place. You are wanted at the camp to help Wing, who is shifting the tents to make room for Mr. Stephens and his men."

Hop got up, and no one objected to the change.

Wild picked up Hop's hand, and saw that it was a royal flush of hearts.



Then he knew just what sort of a game it was, for he took it for granted that the Chinaman was playing to win.

Just how Hop had got the hand made no difference to Young Wild West just then, for he was not going to play the game to win anybody's money.

He was there for the purpose of carrying out the plan he had formed, which was to show up the gamblers in their true form, and get Arietta's watch, at the same time.

The game progressed until there was a large pot on the table.

"What have you got, Young Wild West?" asked Brown, who called Wild.

"A royal flush!" was the startling reply. "Mr. Tenderfoot, just rake in that money for me!"

As our hero showed the cards with his right hand he struck his left against the gambler's pocket.

He felt a watch in it, there was no doubt about it.

Sparrow saw the move on Wild's part, and knowing that the girl's watch was there, he reached over slyly to take it.

But our hero quickly covered him with his revolver.

"Gentlemen," said he, in a ringing tone, "I guess my royal flush wins something more than the pot! Just watch!"

The two gamblers were caught dead to rights.

Charlie covered one, while Wild held the other.

"It is in his coat pocket, Et," Wild said. "Take out your watch. The galoot is a road agent, as well as a gambler."

Our hero scarcely had the words out of his mouth when Arietta's hand went into the pocket of Brown.

Out came the watch, and with an exclamation of delight she held it up so everybody could see it.

"This man stole this from me!" she cried. "He said he was Greg Green, the road agent, but here he is known as Ben Brown, the gambler!"

Crack! Crack!

Two shots rang out just then, and the place was in darkness.

The gamblers had come to the rescue of their captain and Sparrow by shooting out the lights.

Then there was a fierce struggle at the table, and it became overturned.

Wild was afraid Arietta would get hurt, so he let go his hold upon Brown and turned to get his hands on her.

But he could not find her.

The crowd was rushing for the door now, and chairs and tables went over in a hurry.

"Take it easy, boys!" said Wild. "These gamblers have got to be nabbed. They are the galoots who are here to clean out the town. Ropes are waiting for them!"

Just then a chair struck the boy on the head and he went down.

The blow merely dazed him, though, since his hat kept the chair from cutting into his scalp.

But by the time he got up the place was clear.

Some one came running in with a light.

It was Jim Dart.

Three or four men lay on the floor, wounded, for the gamblers had used their knives freely in getting out.

One of the prostrate forms was that of the tenderfoot.

He had been struck on the head with a club.

There he lay in an unconscious condition, his hand grasping the money he had raked from the table.

But Arietta was nowhere to be seen.

Wild rushed out, and found Jim running around through the crowd.

The scout followed him.

"Et! Et!" shouted Young Wild West.

A scream rang out from the creek.

"They are taking her to the cave where I found her this morning!" said Jim Dart.

"Well, they will wish they had not!" answered Wild, coming back into his old state of coolness.

The brave boy felt of the bump on his head, and as there was no blood there, he was ready for business.

Things had not turned out exactly as he had planned them, but he was determined that the gamblers must be caught.

Before seizing Ben Brown at the table he had thrust the five cards he had taken from Hop into his pocket.

His royal flush was there yet!

## CHAPTER XI.

### IN THE CAVE AGAIN.

The very instant the lights went out Sparrow ducked down and got upon the floor.

The villain knew it was his chance to get away, and he meant to take advantage of it.

By some strange luck he ran right against Arietta as he got upon his feet, and acting on a sudden impulse, he caught her in his arms and rushed for the door before the fighting began.

He put his hand over her mouth, and as the girl was clutching her watch in her hands, she could not do much to help herself.

Sparrow made straight for the creek.

Just why he did this he did not know, but it must have been that he had the cave in his mind.

As he reached the bank three of the gamblers came running after him.

They had recognized him, and as he was leading the way somewhere, they had followed him.

They all knew that he had stolen the girl that morning, so when they saw him carrying her away they were not surprised.

As Sparrow stepped into the water one of the villains joined him and helped him hold the struggling girl.

By this time Arietta had got her watch in the pocket of her skirt, and she was now doing her best to get away from the scoundrels.

It was not until she was half-way over the creek, however, before she got a chance to scream.

"Shut up, gal!" exclaimed one of the gamblers. "I'll kill yer if yer holler like that agin!"

Ben Brown came along just then, followed by the rest of his gang.

Splashing and slipping, the seven ruffians went across the creek.

Arietta got the chance, and she screamed again.

"All right, Et!" Wild answered.

He was leading the way to the bank of the creek, with a crowd at his heels.

Just as the two gamblers carrying the girl got out on the opposite side Wild jumped into the creek.

Splash—splash!

Charlie and Jim came right after him.

Splash—splash—splash!

Others followed.

But they could not catch the gamblers before they got to the cave.

It was too near at hand for that.

Sparrow led the way, and when he reached it he pushed the girl in ahead of him and crawled after her.

There was where he made a slight mistake.

He must have figured it that Arietta was like the average girl, and that she would not make a fight.

The moment the girl found that she was free from the scoundrel she crawled ahead and got upon her feet.

Out came her revolver in a twinkling.

Like hunted rabbits the gamblers came into the cave.

"Strike a match, some one," said Sparrow. "Ther gal has got away from me!"

One of them quickly struck a match.

There stood Arietta about ten feet away, a leveled revolver in her hand!

The pale face of the beautiful girl shone like that of an avenging Nemesis in the light made by the burning match.

"Back, you scoundrels!" she cried. "I will shoot the first one who tries to touch me!"

"Confound the girl!" exclaimed Brown, as the match went out. "If you had not bothered with her we would be all right, Sparrow. We can hold this place against the whole crowd in Silver Boom, if it is like you said it was."

Just then there came a call from the outside.

It was from Young Wild West.

"Are you fellows willing to surrender?" he asked.

"No!" answered Brown. "You can't get us, and you know it. There is only one thing for you fellows to do, and that is to quit the game and let us come back in peace. You can have the girl if you agree to that."

"Don't agree to it, Wild!" shouted Arietta. "I have the best of them! I am free in the cave, and I hold my revolver ready to shoot the first one that dares come near me!"

"All right, Et!" answered her lover. "I guess it won't take us long to get the scoundrels. If they dare to harm you one bit they'll suffer all the more for it."

But Sparrow did not propose that the girl should have it all her own way.

It was dark as pitch in the cave, and he figured it that he could creep up and knock the revolver from her hand.



Sparrow crawled around until he found that she had changed her position.

Then he began moving around the cave, keeping close to the wall.

Suddenly Arietta caught a glimpse of something moving near her feet.

The next instant a hand touched her skirt, and then a grab was made at her.

Crack!

The brave girl fired unhesitatingly.

With a shriek of mortal agony Sparrow rolled over on the ground.

Arietta quickly changed her position after firing the shot.

It was really wonderful how cool the girl was.

"The she-fiend has shot him, I guess," Brown said in a low voice, but not so low but that Arietta could hear it.

Suddenly there was a hissing noise, and then a shower of sparks flew into the cave.

Bang!

A big cracker exploded.

Arietta knew who had done that.

Hop Wah had been sent for.

Wild had sent for him as soon as they got across the creek, and made sure that the villains and Arietta were in the cave.

Hop was always ready for such emergencies.

The explosion caused much fright and confusion among the gamblers.

Arietta took advantage of the darkness that settled down after the visitation of the fireworks and began crawling out of the cave.

She was half-way through when her head bumped against another head.

"Et!" said a voice in a low whisper.

"Wild!" she cried out, regardless of the fact that the villains would hear her.

It was Wild, sure enough.

He caught her by the arms and pulled her outside in a jiffy.

He was not an instant too soon, either, for three shots were fired, and one of the bullets came out past the ears of our hero.

Brown and his companions now knew that the girl had fooled them, and that she had made her escape.

The villains were really glad of it, for they knew that if they were captured they would be hanged or shot to death in short order, if it was found that they had killed the girl.

Brown now tried to use persuasion on our friends.

"Yorng Wild West," he asked, "you've got the girl, now what else do you want?"

"We want you!" came the reply.

"You won't give us a chance to light out from the town?"

"I can't do that. You must not think that I have got all to say about it."

"The miners will do anything you say about it; I know they will."

"Never mind about that. You have tried your best to kill the young lady, and now that you find that you failed, you want to get off. You can't get off. Ben Brown, or Greg Green! If we can't get you out of that cave alive you will be dragged out dead, for our Chinaman is going to blow up the cave in a few minutes."

This caused the villains to grow more desperate than they had yet been.

They began firing at the entrance, in the hopes that the bullets might find targets.

But they were but wasting their ammunition.

Crack—crack—crack!

The shots rang out in rapid succession.

Bang!

Another big cracker exploded inside the cave.

"Bettee comee outee, allee samee nice lillee boys!" piped the voice of Hop from the outside. "Me likee play um dlaw pokes with Miler Brown."

Crack!

Brown fired in the hope of hitting the Chinaman, but his bullet merely hit the rocky wall of the cave.

## CHAPTER XII.

### CONCLUSION.

The tenderfoot was one of the last to cross the creek. Some one kindly tied up his head, and he held on to the money he had taken from the table.

Arietta had been escorted across the creek by Wild, while Hop was working the last of his fireworks.

Our hero did not want to kill the men in the cave in any brutal or savage way.

He wanted to get them out and let a judge and jury try them.

Of course, it was easy enough to imagine what the verdict would be.

Big Zack was a sort of leader among the miners, and when he proposed that they stick a fuse in a keg of powder, light it, and then rolled it into the cave, a howl of approval went up.

"Wait, boys," exclaimed Wild, who came across from the other side just in time to hear the proposition. "That would be too barbarous. Let us try and think of another way to get them out. Perhaps if you were to tell them that you are going to blow them up with powder they might surrender."

"Well, all right, then," answered Big Zack, and getting as close to the mouth of the cave as he dared, he yelled out:

"Brown, I've got this business in my hands now, an' I want ter tell yer that if yer don't come out an' stand trial we've got a keg of powder ready ter roll in there an' blow yer inter pieces! Yer want ter make up your mind putty quick. What do yer say?"

"Will we have a fair trial?" came the reply from the gambler leader in a voice that trembled slightly.

"As fair as was ever held in a minin' camp."

"If you'll let Young Wild West be judge I'll agree to surrender," came the answer. "I put enough faith in him to trust my life in his hands. I know he will give a man a fair shake."

"How about it, Mister West?" asked Big Zack.

"Oh, I'll be the judge, then," was our hero's reply.

"Young Wild West says he'll be ther jedge!" shouted the big miner.

"All right! Then we'll surrender."

The crowd lined up on either side of the little opening.

In less than half a minute Brown came out.

He arose to his feet and stood with folded arms.

His weapons were taken from him, and then he was quickly bound.

One after another, the other five came out.

"There were seven of 'em," wasn't there?" asked Big Zack.

"Ther gal shot Sparrer, jest as he was goin' ter grab her," exclaimed one of the gamblers. "He's dead as a door-nail inside."

"That is right," spoke up our hero.

The six prisoners were marched across the creek and lined up in front of the shanty they had constructed.

Wild was doing considerable thinking while all this was taking place.

He was to be the judge, but he did not feel like condemning the gamblers to death.

Though they had tried to kill Arietta in a moment of desperation, they had failed.

That was a charge of attempted murder.

The other two charges were the stealing of Arietta's watch and the attempt to hold up and rob Stephens.

Outside of these charges there was nothing against the gamblers.

Big Zack insisted on a trial right away.

"All right," Wild answered. "Now, since you have selected me for the judge, I suppose I can pick out the jury?"

"Sartin," answered the big miner.

Wild went around among the men and selected those he thought would deal squarely with the prisoners.

There were twelve of them, and he got them to stand in front of the barrel he was to sit upon as the judge of the court.

More lamps had been brought to the scene, and it was now almost as light as day.

Big Zack acted as the prosecutor.

"Jedge," said he, "here is six of ther worst villains that ever drawed ther breath of life, a-waitin' ter be hung!"

"Make your charge against them," answered Wild coolly.

"Well, they stole a gal's watch, an' then they stole ther gal herself. Then they held up a man what had a big wad of money. An' then they steals ther same gal agin an' tried hard ter kill her."

"The girl will step up as the first witness," said Wild, who made up his mind to run the court in accordance with his ways of thinking.

Arietta stepped forward.

She told just what had happened to her.



"Where is the man who twice caught you and carried you across the creek?" Wild asked.

"He is dead," was the reply.

"All right. That removes the charge against the rest of them, then. They simply helped to get you over the creek the second time you were taken there, I believe."

"Yes."

"Well, Mr. Prosecutor, you will have to change the charge. Make it that these six men assisted and willingly acted in conjunction with the man who stole the girl the second time."

"All right," retorted Big Zack; "you're ther jedge."

"That will do for the first witness," said Wild. "Mr. Stephens, step up."

Stephens did so.

"What charge do you make against these villains?"

"They tried to rob me—or three of them did," was the reply.

"That is all. I happen to know myself that three of them did try to rob the witness," our hero went on, addressing the jury, "but since they did not rob him, you can't call it a crime. I recommend that you bring in a verdict of attempted robbery and helping in a case of abduction."

Then the jury began to deliberate.

It did not take them long to find a verdict.

The miner who had been selected as the foreman stepped up to Wild and said:

"We bring in a verdict of guilty, jedge."

"All right. Then the sentence of the court is that the six men be given two hours to settle up their business in this town and get out of it!"

At the end of two hours the prisoners were liberated.

Stephens came up and offered Brown what it had cost him to put up his shanty, and the shanty was sold right then and there.

"Now, Brown," said Wild, "I suppose you have me to thank for saving you and your friends. I don't know whether you appreciate it or not, but I want to tell you one thing! If I ever run across either of you again and find that you are not living honest lives I am going to shoot you dead!"

"That is fair enough," retorted the leader of the gamblers.

Brown did not linger long after that.

He mounted his horse, and so did the rest.

Then they rode out of the camp, taking the trail to Cheyenne.

It was shortly after this that a curious sort of singing was heard in the camp.

"It's Hop on a drunk!" exclaimed Cheyenne Charlie. "How in thunder did he git it so quick? He was jest as sober as he could be when he was shootin' off them firecrackers in ther cave over there."

They walked over to the saloon where Hop had first played cards with Brown, and found the Celestial doing a song-and-dance in front of the building.

The miners were grinning and cheering him on, and everybody was in a good humor.

"Me allee light!" yelled Hop. "Me allee samee Young Wild West! Me shootee like bully boy with um glasse eye! Hoolay!"

He became so excited that he fell down then, and the crowd started to pull him into the saloon to give him more tanglefoot.

But Wild gently remonstrated with them, and succeeded in getting the Chinaman away from them.

Hop had been of great service to them in getting Arietta out of the cave, but he would get under the influence of liquor, and there seemed to be no way of stopping him.

The next morning Wild gave the money he had lost back to the tenderfoot.

He only took what he had put in the pot himself, and the rest was handed over to Hop.

It belonged to the Chinaman, if it did to anybody, for it was he who had first held Young Wild West's Royal Flush.

Next week's issue will contain "YOUNG WILD WEST AND THE PRAIRIE PIRATES; OR, THE FIGHT FOR THE BOX OF GOLD."

## SPECIAL NOTICE

Please give your newsdealer a standing order for your weekly copy of "WILD WEST WEEKLY." The War Industries Board has asked all publishers to save waste. Newsdealers must, therefore, be informed if you intend to get a copy of this weekly every week, so they will know how many copies to order from us.

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## CURRENT NEWS

### BOY'S BANK FUND GREW.

For twenty years or more the Dauphin Deposit and Trust Company of Harrisburg has been urging William Jennings to find a savings' fund certificate of deposit so that he could withdraw a deposit and enable the Dauphin bank to get a bothersome item off the books.

Mr. Jennings, who is president of the Commonwealth Trust Company and First National Bank, deposited \$10 in the Dauphin bank savings fund September 20, 1878. His father, the late Col. William W. Jennings, had promised him that when he saved \$5 an additional \$5 would be given him. The younger Jennings got the last of his \$5 on the date mentioned and the deposit was made the same day.

The other day Mr. Jennings came across the old deposit slip, made out to "Master William Jennings." He presented it to the Dauphin bank and got his \$10, plus thirty-nine years' interest of about \$20.

### OPEN WINTER, SAYS ROBINS.

Regardless of belated prophecies by students of the goosebone that winter will be severe after all, signs are multiplying that there will be hardly anything that could be called a winter, compared with normal years.

The goosebone adherents are pointing to certain dark spots on the bone which they believe mean a late but severe winter, starting in earnest some time in January, with all the severe features near the close, in March or around Easter.

With robins and bluebirds about, fields almost as green as in April; peach trees nearly ready to bud, dandelion pickers abroad and fur-bearing animals not yet in hibernation, there is no lack of evidence that this is an extraordinary season, and that no come-back of last year's coal famine, 'way below zero temperature and misery all around is to be staged this time.

Reports from the pines near Morgantown say robins can be seen there almost any day, and down near Carsonia robins, bluebirds and cardinals are numerous. There has not been a single real killing frost at Reading, Pa., this year.

### JOY RIDE OF NEWSY INTERRUPTED BY POLICEMAN.

A thrilling joy ride of a seven-year-old newsboy was rudely interrupted by a police sergeant at Denver, Colo. The ride was fast and furious, as the young driver zigzagged from one side of Broadway to the other, forcing pedestrians to flee and

drivers of other cars to seek the curb and side streets.

The boy watched Dr. E. A. Sherrer leave his automobile in front of St. Joseph's Hospital. Desire for a ride seized him. Jumping into the car and laying his papers on the seat beside him, young Bland threw the engine into gear and succeeded in getting around the obstructions in the street and threaded his way between street cars and automobiles toward the suburbs. Every one gave way to the automobile and the boy driver bounced up and down in the seat as he laughed at speed ordinances.

The boy could make out the form of a bluecoated policeman warning him to stop, and he brought the machine to a standstill in compliance with the sergeant's order. In consideration of the youth of the offender, the sergeant decided to take him home instead of to the lockup.

### LABORER FOUND \$5,000 IN CASH AND LOOKED FOR THE OWNER.

Page Diogenes! That honest man he sought so long has been found.

He resides in Dallas, Tex., is a common laborer and his name is Haymen Trailer.

After finishing a hard day's work for which he was paid the modest sum of \$2.50, Trailer started home. On his way he passed across the court of one of the local banks. There he found a wallet.

Trailer put the billbook in his hip pocket and went on his way. After journeying several blocks it occurred to him that he might as well see what that billbook contained. He drew it from his pocket and opened it up.

He had never had heart failure, but he grew faint when he saw the contents. He grew fainter when he counted the money.

That wallet contained an even \$5,000 in greenbacks and a certified check for \$3,000. Well, what did Trailer do? He went to every newspaper in the city and advertised for the owner. Next day he placed the money in a bank and waited for the owner to come.

She came. Mrs. G. S. Herbey, of West, Tex., had lost the money. She was as surprised to recover it as Trailer was to find it, and Trailer was well paid for his honesty.

"I could have kept it, but my conscience would not let me," he said. "It was not mine. Now I have quite a nice little sum and the good lady who lost the billbook is happy, too."

Thus the man Diogenes was hunting dismissed the matter from his mind and went about his work.



# STANDING BY HIS CHUM

—OR—

## THE SCHOOLBOYS OF RICHLAND HALL

By DICK ELLISON

(A SERIAL STORY)

### CHAPTER XVI ((Continued)).

A tall young man of about twenty-five, dressed in working clothes and overalls, entered the cabin.

His face was deathly white, and wore a worried expression, which changed to one of immense surprise when his eyes rested upon Sam Sloan.

"Fullerton," said Mr. Fishton, "allow me to introduce my young friend, Sam Sloan." He is a good deal of a mechanic, and more of an electrician. He is to be one of us now—understand?"

Fullerton surveyed Sam's wet clothes with a puzzled expression.

"May I ask where he came from?" he said.

"From the fishes," was the reply, "and further than that your curiosity will not be gratified. My orders are for you to show him everything and explain everything. If you do as I tell you, Fullerton, then I may be inclined to listen to your request to let you resign your position—understand?"

"I wish to heaven you would then, sir," replied Fullerton. "This confinement is telling on my health. I shall be a dead man in two weeks' time if I don't get relief."

"Take him away," retorted Fishton, adding:

"Sloan, presently I will send you dry clothes. Fullerton will show you everything. Do not be alarmed. You will be well treated here."

Thus dismissed, Sam followed Fullerton into the engine-room of the submarine.

We shall not attempt to particularly describe it, as to the general reader such description would hardly be interesting.

Enough to say that the electrical apparatus to which Fullerton introduced Sam Sloan was of a very crude description, and to-day would promptly be dumped on the scrap heap.

But to Sam it was a wonder, and he listened and looked in amazement as Fullerton explained the method by which the craft was driven forward, raised and lowered.

Of course, Sam tried to ask other questions as to Mr. Fishton himself, and what the object of so much secrecy was.

But Fullerton immediately drew into his shell.

"Look here," he said. "He's a dangerous man. I'm not bucking up against him. I'm not even asking you how you got aboard here. As for me, I'll

tell you this much: I'm a practical machinist and electrician. By answering an advertisement I fell into this man's clutches. He has never paid me a cent. I have never seen the light of day since I came to him, a year ago. He fears that I will expose him. I fear that he will kill me. He says he is going to let me go. I shall believe it when I get away. Heaven help you, young fellow. You have fallen into bad hands."

"Is he crazy?" questioned Sam.

"I don't think there can be a doubt of it," was the reply. "He is a monomaniac on the subject of submarines, anyway. He is a dreadful man, and you might as well be dead as be here. But come, I'll show you the workshop now."

Fullerton led the way back into the cabin.

Mr. Fishton had departed.

Pulling a lever, the little turret, which was made partly of rubber and partly of steel, unfolded from the ceiling, and moved up as Sam had first seen it.

Putting a step-ladder in place, Fullerton climbed up, and Sam followed him out on top of the submarine, which rested in the water within a bricked-up enclosure vaulted overhead.

There was a standing ladder against the wall, by means of which they descended to a narrow board walk, which led them to a door.

This Fullerton opened, and they entered a small workshop which was fitted up with every sort of mechanical appliance.

"This has been my home for a year and over," said Fullerton, gloomily.

He opened another door, revealing a room where there was a bed and a table spread for supper.

"Here's where I sleep," he added. "I get no further. I suppose it is intended that you shall bunk in with me."

A bell rang.

"Here comes my jailer," said Fullerton. "Watch that other door."

Suddenly it flew open, revealing still another door behind it.

This had a movable shutter up near the top, which was also open.

In the breach was the head of Mike Cole.

He held a revolver in his hand, which he just showed for an instant.



"Fair warning!" he cried. "It is death to attempt to fool with me."

He withdrew his hand, and in a minute it appeared again, holding a coat and trousers.

"Take these clothes, boy," he said. "There's more coming."

"Dress yourself and we will have supper," said Fullerton, and he retired to the machine shop.

Sam stripped, and put on the clothes, which he recognized as a suit he had once seen Reggie Van Dorn wear.

He then called in Fullerton, and they sat down to a plain but substantial meal, cold, of course.

Sam tried to question the man further, but he could get very little out of him.

Among other things, he asked Fullerton why he didn't take the submarine and make off with it if he wanted to escape.

"Because the battery is kept in the cabin, and he takes it away with him when he goes out," was the reply. "The submarine is nothing but a dead mass of iron as it stands now."

And this, of course, was reason enough.

That night Sam slept with the gloomy Fullerton, who really did seem to be a very sick man.

Three days passed, and nobody was seen save Mike Cole, who brought them their meals.

But on the first day Mike brought a note to Fullerton.

It repeated Mr. Fishton's instructions to show Sam everything.

Fullerton obeyed, and Sam was instructed in every detail of the working of the submarine craft.

It contained radical defects, which need not be entered into here.

Some of these Sam thought he could remedy.

Fullerton did not agree with his theories, and they had some hot discussions.

At last they got to be decidedly on the outs.

The confinement and poor ventilation was beginning to tell on Sam.

It seemed to him that he could just endure the situation no longer, when one evening the warning bell, which always sounded before the door opened, rang sharply.

"That's the boss!" cried Fullerton. "Probably he means to go out to-night."

The inner door flew open, and the panel of the outer door shot back.

There stood Mr. Fishton, looking in upon them with an evil smile on his face.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### DICK RUNS INTO DANGER.

Dick Dutton led his party to the big gate.

He expected every moment to have Mr. Fishton or Mike Cole at their heels, but no such alarm came.

On the way Jack explained to the girls the old situation, telling of the midnight visit of the Rich-

land Hall boys, and of their experience with the "King of the Night."

"He must be some lunatic they keep locked in upstairs there," said Jennie.

"Perhaps he is Sam Sloan gone crazy," Nellie suggested.

"No, he isn't Sam," said Dick, "and Jack and Joe agree with me. We all saw his face pretty distinctly. He is a different looking proposition altogether."

"What can it mean?" questioned Nellie. "Something ought to be done about it. I am positive sure it was Sam I saw in the automobile, but my father won't hear a word of it."

"Neither will Dr. Richland," added Dick. "He has the Russian idea firmly fixed in his noddle, and you can't budge him. Meanwhile what is happening to poor Sam?"

"We did very wrong in accepting that crazy fellow's invitation to come in here," said Nellie.

"Don't agree with you," retorted Jack. "I'm mighty glad we came. I'm going to speak to father myself about this business. I believe I can stir him up to do something. But what about getting out here?"

They had reached the gate.

Dick looked it over, and discovered that it was not locked, although there was a huge lock attached to it.

Instead it was secured by two bolts on their side.

Perhaps it had been thus left so that Mike Cole could enter when he returned.

At all events Dick made short work of the fastenings and opened the gate.

"No sense in waiting here for Reggie," he declared. "Come on, girls, Joe and I will see you safe to Castleton."

"I think we ought to wait for Mr. Van Dorn, then," said Fanny. "We promised."

"We didn't do anything of the sort," laughed Dick. "Really, Fan, I believe you are stuck on the crazy fellow—upon my word I do."

"Oh, I think he's real nice," retorted Fanny, with a toss of her head. "It's a shame for that horrid Mr. Fishton to treat him as he does."

"Oh, ho!" cried Jack. "Hear that, will you! Why, the fellow has everything that heart can wish for. But am I to go off with his clothes?"

This led to a general laugh, and discussion followed.

The key of the little door was forgotten.

But Dick had not forgotten it.

He had the key safe in his pocket, and he intended to use it, too.

"I shall wait for nobody to make a move," he said to himself. "I'm going to act alone if I can't get Joe's help. I propose to stand by my chum."

Such was his resolution as he escorted Jennie Lisle home that evening.

It had not changed when he and Joe reached Richland Hall and started to turn in.

(To be continued.)



## A FEW GOOD ITEMS

### SAYS RAT STOLE HIS \$431.

Arrested on a charge of being intoxicated and confined overnight in the local police station at Connellsville, Pa., James Woody, of Leisenring No. 1, declares that a rat stole his pocketbook containing \$431.

According to the story the prisoner told Mayor John Duggan, he dropped his purse on the floor of his cell soon after being locked up and a large rat came along and dragged away the purse containing the money. With the aid of electric flashlights the officers and Woody spent several hours in a futile search for the missing purse.

### KILLED BY TRAIN AFTER ALL.

C. A. Lidie, Cleveland, O., after thirty years "on the road" with the Erie Railroad, abandoned his job to avoid danger from the trains. And every day since his wife would congratulate herself that now she could be content in the knowledge that he would come home safe from his work in the office of the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen.

Then one day he took a holiday, and with his wife visited a cousin at Warren, O. The three went riding in the cousin's automobile. They came to a crossing.

All three were killed by a passing train.

### BIRDS STEAL RIDES.

Birds are fast taking the place of hoboes on the brakebeams of trains, according to John E. Sexton, president of the Eureka-Nevada Railroad Company of Palisade, Nev., who arrived in San Francisco, Cal., the other day with Mrs. Sexton to spend the holidays.

Sexton says birds, especially sparrows and linnets, are extremely lazy this year, and instead of flying from the east to the west, are riding the brakebeams.

Citing an instance, Sexton said that about 300 birds riding on a Southern Pacific train passing through Nevada from the East recently, flew from beneath their perches on the coach when the train passed over a rough crossing.

### BATTLE TURNED HAIR GRAY.

Sing Kee, the young Chinese whose heroism at the Battle of Bazoches, in the Argonne, has won him Nation-wide fame, is a gray-haired man now, although only a boy in years, as a result of his experience in France, according to a letter to his father, Charles Kee, of No. 602 North Sixth Street, San Jose, Cal.

Sing Kee remained at an advanced post, keeping his regimental commander informed of the progress of the battle in spite of a hail of bullets and

shrapnel. Some of his messages were sent back by dog messengers after the telephones went out.

J. J. McKenna, another San Jose boy who has seen service "over there," has returned home. His hair, too, is gray, although he is only just past twenty years of age.

### THREE BROTHERS LOSE ARMS.

Misfortune of a peculiar kind has followed the Kemp family, pioneers of the Imperial Valley and well known through the connection of the men with its development. Three of the Kemp brothers have each lost an arm within a year, the last to meet the misfortune being a soldier in the trenches in France during the last days of the fighting.

Just a year ago Harold Kemp's hand was caught in the "auger" of a cotton gin, into which his right arm was drawn and mangled so badly that amputation became necessary. Last summer George Kemp, a younger brother, lost his left arm in the same gin and in much the same manner. Last week the news came from France that a piece of shell had struck F. O. Kemp and carried away his right arm.

### A STRANGE BATTLE.

Aubrey Sara, an enthusiastic yachtsman, recently had an exciting contest with a man-eating shark, says the Sphere. He was on a fishing excursion off Kakan Island, near Auckland Harbor, New Zealand, in a surf boat manned by four rowers and equipped for a day's fishing. Mr. Sara suddenly heard a splashing noise, and glancing round saw a porpoise pursued by shark—pursued and pursuer heading direct for the boat. Mr. Sara had come prepared with a rifle and an excellent harpoon about 12 feet long, attached to the latter being about 60 fathoms of tough whale line. But a few seconds elapsed before the porpoise reached the boat, when, as asking mutely for protection, it lay huddled so closely to the boat that the occupants could have touched it. The shark made straight for the porpoise, the latter diving under the boat in the nick of time, followed closely by the greedy scavenger, the shark coming up to the surface but a few feet from the boat. Now was Mr. Sara's opportunity, and with unerring aim he let fly the harpoon, the blade sinking deeply into the monster's body. With a terrible swishing rush, the water being thrashed into foam in a fruitless endeavor to shake the barbed metal from its body, the maddened brute dived toward the bottom, the line paying out at a terrific rate. Soon, however, it rose to the surface again, and then a grand display of fish energy was witnessed, while bullet after bullet entered the shark's soft flesh. Though riddled again and again, the fierce creature kept on fighting, succumbing only after a struggle of three hours' duration.



## FROM ALL POINTS

### RABBITS DO THEIR BIT.

Practically every town and county in Western Kansas is having what is called a Red Cross hunt this month. Rabbits are unusually plentiful throughout the West, and real rabbit drives are being held, all of the rabbits sold for shipment to the Eastern States and the money is turned over to the Red Cross fund.

The other day a drive was held near Zurich, and more than 600 rabbits were killed. They were sold at 8 cents each for shipment to New York and other Eastern points, where it is said they are retailing at 75 cents each, while the jack-rabbits are selling at \$1.

In the Zurich hunt people from all the surrounding counties participated, some coming as much as fifty miles, regarding it as their patriotic duty.

### BIG FISH HAUL.

A world's fish-catching record was claimed the other day by the crew of the fishing smack Verbus Veribus Unitus. The craft entered San Diego, Cal., from the Lower California coast with a cargo of 79,000 pounds of bonita and barracuda, the largest cargo of its kind ever delivered at San Diego in a single fishing smack. The entire catch was taken in one haul from a net 150 fathoms long and fifty fathoms deep.

The crew of the Unitus said that 12,000 pounds more, caught in the same net, was turned over to the fishing sloop Minnie F., because the Unitus was unable to handle the record-breaking catch. Sixty thousand pounds of the fish were sold to local dealers at 7 cents a pound, netting the fishermen \$4,200 for the three days' trip.

The remainder was sold to a Los Angeles fishing firm. The fish were caught at a point about fifty miles southwest of Ensenada.

### TOO BIG FOR UNIFORM.

Riley Rucker, a Linn County, Ore., young man, has served more than four months in the United States Army and has had no uniform.

Rucker is 6 feet 4 inches tall and weighs over 300 pounds. He went to Camp Lewis last July with a selective service contingent. For one month he was in quarantine. Then he was placed in the Depot Brigade and reported for a uniform. Nothing could be found to fit him. His measurement was taken and orders sent East for a special uniform. When it finally came, Rucker could not get into it.

Rucker was measured again, and this time definite instructions accompanied the order. The uniform was made, but before it was started from the East to Camp Lewis came the signing of the armistice. Rucker has arrived home, in civilian attire, discharged.

### HOW MAHOGANY IS FOUND.

Mahogany trees do not grow in clusters, but are scattered throughout the forest and hidden in a dense growth of underbrush, vines and creepers, and require a skilful and experienced woodsman to find them. He seeks the highest ground in a forest, climbs to the top of the tallest tree, and surveys the surrounding country. The mahogany has a peculiar foilage, and his practiced eye soon detects the trees within sight.

The axmen follow the hunter, and then come the sawyers and hewers, a large mahogany taking two men a full day to fell it. The tree has large spurs which project from the trunk at its base, and scaffolds must be erected so that the tree can be cut off above the spurs. This leaves a stump fifteen feet high, which is sheer waste, as the stump really contains the best lumber.

The hunter has nothing to do with the work of cutting or removing the tree, his duty being simply to locate it. If he is clever and energetic, his remuneration may amount to five hundred or one thousand dollars a month; but he may travel weeks at a time without detecting a tree, and as he is generally paid by results his earnings are rather precarious.

### FLIES 1,650 MILES.

An observation De Haviland airplane reached Detroit January 4 from Ellington Field, Houston, Tex., making the 1,650 mile trip in 724 minutes of flying time and the last lap from Indianapolis at the rate of 122 miles an hour, under adverse weather conditions.

The machine was one of three which left Ellington Field on a "Gulf to Detroit and return" map making and observation trip December 21, and was piloted by Captain L. J. Robinson, with Lieutenant A. A. Adams as observer.

Captain Robinson made the flight under the direction of the technical department of the Engineering Corps for observation and to test the operation of the Liberty engine under severe weather conditions.

Captain Robinson stated on his arrival here that the flights yesterday from St. Louis to Indianapolis and to-day from Indianapolis to Detroit were made through weather and at continued low temperatures that it had hitherto been held could not be contended with. Today's flight was made with temperatures ranging from zero to ten below, but no engine or oil troubles were experienced, although no special engine equipment had been provided.

The two map-making machines, in charge of Lieutenant Hill, are at Indianapolis awaiting weather favorable for map making and reconnaissance.



## A DESPERATE DEED.

By Horace Appleton

The scene was an office in Broad Street one morning in the fall of the year. The street door of the office of Markland & Co., money brokers, opened very suddenly, a gust of cold wind blew in, making the clerks shiver, and then a tall man, attired in a neat suit of black, wearing a plain caped coat, a high silk hat, patent leather shoes and dog-skin gloves, walked in in a timid, shrinking way.

"Ah, good-morning, Roger Clifford. Glad to see you."

"Mr. Markland, I called in reference to the note for one thousand dollars I gave you three months ago, indorsed by my employer."

"Ah, yes. Do you want to pay it?"

"No—not exactly. I wanted to get it extended."

"Well, Mr. Clifford, I am sorry I cannot accommodate you."

"Why not? I will pay you the interest—double interest, if you want it," nervously said Roger Clifford.

"The reason I cannot help you, Mr. Clifford," said the foxy little broker, interrupting him, "is simply because I sold your note to a friend of mine."

"Who is the person who bought it?"

"The gentleman told me to say his name was not to be mentioned."

"Can you not do me a favor, Mr. Markland?"

"That depends entirely upon what it is."

"Ask the purchaser to wait until to-morrow to present the note, and I will meet him here in your office to pay it."

"Oh, I guess he will accommodate you, as he is not a man who is ever in much need of small amounts of money. I will ask him for you."

"Thank you," said the cashier with a sigh of relief, and bowing very profoundly to Mr. Markland he left the broker's office.

A moment later he walked into the banker's office and went to the closet, divested himself of his hat, coat and gloves, and proceeding to his desk, bent over his accounts, meantime wondering how he was to get out of his financial difficulty. The only conclusion he could arrive at was to borrow the money from his employer, and a few hours later he went over to James Stafford's desk and asked for the amount. The banker looked at the unhappy man pityingly.

"See here, Roger," he said in kind tones, "you are certainly overstepping yourself. You have been with me for twenty years now, and I have implicitly trusted you in everything. But you are living beyond your income, like a great many other foolish, improvident men, and must reach the end of your resources at last."

Thousands upon thousands of dollars came into Clifford's hands that day for his employer, and he entered it in the books, wishing with an insuperable

longing that a portion of it was his own; then the gold was put into little canvas bags, with the amounts specified on tags, and the greenbacks were counted out and stacked in little heaps, and pinned up with bands of paper, and all of the money was stacked away in the huge, burglar-proof safe; then the business of the day was finished. How longingly Clifford glanced at the huge safe as he put on his hat and coat to leave the office!

As he gained the sidewalk, Mr. Stafford was coming down the steps from his office, but the cashier did not notice him, for his attention was suddenly called to a flashy-looking man, who evidently had been waiting for him to come out. This personage was a well-known thief and gambler, whom Roger Clifford had recently met in a resort wherein he had lost all he had at playing cards.

"Hello, Clifford—I've been waiting for you some time."

"What do you want?" muttered the cashier, reddening.

"Dust! You owe me a hundred, and I'm dead broke."

For an instant it seemed to Clifford that he would groan aloud.

It made him desperate. He was menaced on all sides.

Grabbing the gambler by the shoulder, he said:

"You come with me, Joe Wilson—I want to talk to you."

A shade of surprise crossed the face of the banker as he watched his trusted clerk walking away with the flashy-looking individual.

"A gambler! A veritable gambler!" he muttered. "Nice company for him."

There was a buffet saloon in the basement of a house on Broad Street, and the cashier hurried his companion in, and they entered one of a row of small compartments at one side.

A bottle of wine was ordered, and when they were served and the waiter had gone out, Clifford locked the door and seated himself opposite his curious companion at the small, round, cherry-wood table, on which the bottle and glasses stood, gleaming in the light of the gas jet overhead.

"Well," said the gambler, "and now, what are you up to?"

"Wilson, I am driven to desperation for want of money."

"Are you? That is too bad," laughed the gambler.

"There is only one means by which I can get it," the cashier continued rapidly.

"And what is that?"

"By a robbery."

"Are you going to commit a robbery?"

"No. I would not dare. I want you to do it."

"Explain yourself."

"You know I am cashier of James Stafford, the banker?"

"Of course I do. Well?"

"If I told you the combination to open his safe, could you do it?"



"I certainly could, and would."

"The safe contains over seventy thousand dollars."

"Jingo! that would be a nice haul."

"If you will do the job to-night, and give me half, I will tell you how the job can be done."

"If you mean business, and are not joking, I will do it."

"The only difficulty will be for you to get into the building."

"Is there a watchman there?"

"Yes."

"Then I will get in!"

Clifford then told him the combination of the safe and several other details.

"Another thing," he said in conclusion. "Besides myself, only Mr. Stafford knows how to open the safe. You must make it appear as if you forced the safe open, or suspicion will fall upon me sure."

"Why?"

"Because Stafford knows how hard up I am."

"Very well. You must prepare an alibi."

"I will. I will go to Mr. Stafford's house."

"That is the best thing in the world."

"But I must see you to-night, after the job is done."

"You can do so. Name the locality, and I will be there."

"Meet me on the Brooklyn Bridge at twelve o'clock. I will be strolling along the foot-path, on this side of the New York tower, below the stairs."

"Good. You can go there after you leave Stafford's house. The robbery will be committed by ten o'clock, in order that the watchman will know the time and report it when he gets free. As soon as I get the money I will go directly to the bridge and give you your share; then I will skip."

They continued their conversation at some length, finished the bottle of wine, and the cashier left his companion and went home.

He was moody and morose over his proposed tillany, could eat no supper, and went out about eight o'clock, after telling his wife he would return late, and made his way to James Stafford's magnificent home on Fifth Avenue. He was ushered into the parlor, and was informed that the banker had not yet returned home from his place of business. Mrs. Stafford came in, and seemed to be very much depressed in spirits over her husband's absence.

Keeping the alarmed lady engrossed in conversation, the time passed by until the clock struck ten. Then there came a ring at the door bell. A moment later a servant handed in a telegraph dispatch. It was from the banker, apprising his wife that the cab horse he usually hired had become frightened and ran away with the vehicle.

He had jumped out, sustained a blow that rendered him unconscious, but fortunately was not injured to any extent, and assured her that the people into whose house he had been carried had taken good care of him. He said he would be home within a short time.

There was no reason why Clifford should remain any longer.

He therefore bade the lady good-night, and retired.

A hack carried him downtown to the bridge, and after dismissing it he laid down a cent at the box office and walked out on the foot-path.

A glance at his gold chronometer showed him it was after eleven o'clock. He had scarcely replaced his watch in his pocket when there suddenly sounded the rush of feet behind him, and the next instant two figures dashed by. One of the men fell, and the other sprang upon him, when a terrible struggle ensued. A bridge policeman was hurrying toward the scene of the struggle, and as Clifford's eyes fell upon the man under the other on the walk he saw that it was Joe Wilson, the thief.

A pair of handcuffs were snapped upon Wilson's wrists just then, too.

"I am lost!" he groaned in agony. "Lost! Lost! Lost!"

Just then James Stafford alighted from the carriage, and reaching out his hand he touched the despairing man on the arm.

"Roger!" he exclaimed in deep, sonorous tones.

"Mr. Stafford!" burst from the wretched man's pale lips as he recoiled in affright and gazed into the grave, accusing eyes of the man who had trusted him.

"I know everything, Roger. I saw you join the thief, and I followed you to that saloon. Hidden in the compartment next to yours I overheard the whole plot. I might have prevented the robbery, only I was injured in an accident after I followed you out of that saloon. The horse ran away. But when I was able to leave the house wherein my unconscious body was carried it was too late to prevent the robbery, so I purchased a coat like yours in order to resemble you, and with the policeman in citizen's clothes, who just captured Wilson, I came here. He mistook me for you, and gave me your share of the booty. Then the officer ran for him, he fled, but now that he is captured I will recover the rest of the money."

"And I," brokenly said Clifford, wringing his hands, "will go to prison."

"You ought to, for you already had added forgery to your criminality. I noticed long ago your want of money, and suspecting you had you watched. The result was that I found out about the note you gave Markland & Co., and I bought it to save you from disgrace. Here is the note with its false signature—and this is the end of it!"

He tore the note into fragments and threw the pieces away.

"And now?" Clifford faintly gasped, as an imploring look shone in his dilated eyes.

"And now—can you turn over a new leaf and become a better man in future?"

"With heaven's help I can!"

"Then I forgive you, Roger, and hope this will teach you a good lesson."



## WILD WEST WEEKLY.

NEW YORK, FEBRUARY 7, 1919.

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## GOOD CURRENT NEWS ARTICLES

Although no official statement has yet been made, it is understood that the British warship Hood, now nearing completion, will be the largest fighting vessel in the world. She is 894 feet long and will carry eight 15-inch guns. Her hull is fitted with an outer cushion, against which, it is claimed, torpedoes and mines will explode harmlessly. The Hood will cost \$16,875,000.

A campaign aimed at the extermination of useless dogs is being launched by the extension department of the North Dakota Agricultural College. The fact that dogs are permitted to run at large is responsible in a measure at least for wool shortage. The college authorities say an investigation has disclosed that a dog eats about \$34 worth of food a year.

Late investigation by experts in the employ of the Russian Government has demonstrated that the surface level of the Caspian Sea is continually sinking, until now it is beginning to interfere with the navigation. The cause of this phenomenon is traced to the diminishing inflow of water from the rivers tributary to the Caspian, especially the Volga, so that the evaporation from the large surface, more than 169,300 square miles, is greater than the influx of river water. A comprehensive study of the matter is being made by scientists.

Losses of hundreds of sheep and cattle by stock raisers in San Juan County, New Mexico, were explained when the county agent discovered the wild milk weed and its poisonous properties. The agent pointed out the plant to farmers and stockmen, several meetings were held to plan how to meet the danger and committees were appointed to inspect every part of La Plata District, which includes 20,000 acres. By helping the stockmen to locate and avoid the weed, the agent hopes that serious loss will be avoided.

If you are of average weight, height, and appetite and live to be seventy-five you will have eaten fifty-four tons of solid food and fifty-three tons of liquid. That is about 1,200 times your own weight. If you were to stack the bread you will have consumed in this number of years the pile would equal a fair-sized building. The amount of butter you will have used on this bread would come to a ton and a quarter. If you are a lover of bacon and were to stretch that which you have eaten out in single slices four miles would be the length. Five tons of fish and 12,000 eggs would stand to your credit, while the normal cheese eater would easily have consumed 400 pounds. The vegetables you will have eaten would fill a train three miles long. You will have consumed some 10,000 pounds of sugar and 1,500 pounds of salt. If you are a smoker you will have used about a half-ton of tobacco in pipes and will have smoked 1,000,000 cigarettes.

## GRINS AND CHUCKLES

"Describe water, Johnny," said the teacher. "Water," explained Johnny, "is a white fluid that turns black when you put your hands in it."

Barton—What is the matter with your car. Tom Sawyer—Dunno. The garage owner said that there was too much wind in the windshield.

"Some people are humorous without even knowing it." "As when, for instance?" "Here's a man advertising a lecture on 'The Panama Canal,' illustrated with slides."

"Does Wilkins own his house or does he rent it?" inquired one neighbor of another. "Rents it," was the decided response. "How do you know?" "He strikes matches on the paint."

Little Edna—Why wouldn't it do to pray for our bread once a week or once a month? Why must we ask every day for our daily bread? Older Sister—So as to have it fresh, goosey.

Mrs. Kawler—I'm glad to hear you say you wish the war was over, Bobby. It's a very cruel business. Bobby—"Tain't that. War makes history, and there's more of that already than I can learn.

"What was your object in asking Grimes for that ten he owes you? Don't you know he'll never pay it?" "Oh, yes, I know that, but I thought he looked as if he was getting ready to touch me again."

"Why, don't you yawn when he stays too long?" inquired the mother. "Then he'll take the hint and go." "I did do that very thing," confessed the daughter, "and he told me what beautiful teeth I had."



## GOOD READING

### RICH INDIAN TAKES WIFE.

Old Dog, chief of the Gros Ventres, one of the four tribes which lives in peace and harmony on Berthold Reservation, has brought Mrs. Old Dog to a hospital for treatment. Old Dog is a full-blooded Gros Ventre, and is one of the wealthiest and most progressive Indians on the reservation. He has thousands of acres of good land, several thousand head of registered cattle and hundreds of fine horses. Last summer he built a nine-room home in which he installed a modern heating and plumbing system.

### 113,152,796 GALLONS OF WHISKY LEFT.

Just 113,152,796 gallons of whisky and other spirits remained in bonded warehouses in the United States January 1, a little more than half the quantity in reserve when distillation was stopped sixteen months ago, according to reports received from revenue collectors. When distillation was stopped by the Food Conservation Act approximately 200,000,000 gallons were held in reserve in bonded warehouses. On most of the quantity taken out since then a tax of \$3.20 a gallon has been paid, or about \$270,000,000, enough to run the Government four days in war times.

Despite the heavy withdrawals in the past three months—about 10,500,000 gallons in December, 9,500,000 in November and 8,358,000 in October—revenue officers now believe that at least 75,000,000 will remain in warehouses when the Nation goes dry next July 1. This will have to be converted into alcohol or spirits largely for industrial uses or shipped to other countries.

### PAYS \$2,600 FOR NUGGETS AND GETS \$3 IN BRASS.

Lewis Weisband, a grocer at Twenty-eighth Street and Polk Avenue, Camden, was swindled out of \$2,600, four diamond rings valued at \$500 and a \$100 watch. The swindler called himself Kerensky.

He told Weisband, when they met three weeks ago, that he was out of work and had a wife and three children in New York City to support.

Several days later Kerensky told Weisband he had met a man who had a chest full of Mexican gold nuggets, which he wanted to sell quickly, so he could leave town. Kerensky introduced the man to Weisband. The nuggets were produced. Another man, who said he was an expert, appeared with acids and scales, tested the gold and pronounced it worth about \$6,000.

Weisband withdrew his life's savings from the bank, turned over his jewelry and took the nuggets.

The other day he went to the Assay Office and found the nuggets were brass and worth about \$3.

### QUEER CAVES.

Exploration of caves in South Berkshire, Mass., resulting in the discovery of stalactites and stalagmites, big white spiders weaving their webs, bats incrustated in the crystals and a submarine brook, made Jack Newboy, of Lenoxdale, recall the day that he went rabbit hunting in the Patterson woods.

Newboy's dog chased a rabbit into a cave. Jack waited outside for results. He waited two hours, called the dog and, getting no results, went home. He found the dog was at home and had the rabbit. Pat, his brother, explained:

"I was fishing on a lake not far from the shore when I heard a commotion in the water nearby and was surprised to see a rabbit in the water. As I watched the dog came to the surface, swam after the rabbit and captured him."

### WEST POINT SLANG.

The cadets at the Academy, besides having much of the general college slang, have many interesting expressions of their own. A cadet for a few weeks after his arrival is "beast" or "animal." If he happens to be impertinent or puts on airs he is a "rabid beast" or "fast animal," or "B. J." (bolt before June) is applied to him. A fourth class man is "plebe;" third class man, "yearling;" while one who enters in July is "Juliet;" a cadet in the ranks, without chevrons, "buck;" a cadet officer, "quill;" cadet officer deprived of chevrons, "B. A." (busted aristocrat); to deprive an officer of chevrons, "bump;" musicians of the Fife and Drum Corps, "hell cats;" frequenters of the Y. M. C. A., "hell dodgers;" the full dress hat worn by the cadets, "tarbucket;" the coat of arms of the Academy worn upon the cap, "fried egg."

Ordnance and gunnery becomes "ignorance and gummery;" to make a perfect recitation is to "max it;" to fail or make a poor recitation is to "fess," while to stand at the blackboard so as to keep from reciting until the bugle blows is to "bugle it."

"Muck" is muscle or strength; "brace," efforts of plebes to look excessively military; "soiree," an unpleasant task or duty; "walrus," one who can swim; "to hive," to catch in some breach of discipline; "to skin," to report some offense; "P. C. S." (previous condition of servitude), occupation before entering the Academy. A punishment for cadets consisting of walking the area is known as a "tour," while a cadet frequently receiving this punishment is an "A. B." (Area Bird). Memorial Day is "Poncho Day," because it invariably rains and necessitates the use of the poncho.



## FROM ALL POINTS

### CHILDREN ON FARMS.

Twenty-one thousand children in the State of Washington are enrolled in agricultural and stock clubs through the efforts of Mrs. Elizabeth Jones, in charge of boys' and girls' agricultural clubs in this State under the direction of the United States Department of Agriculture. Mrs. Jones is now going to British Columbia to organize clubs among the children there.

### CHEAP LIFE IN PRISON.

Here is the latest solution of the high cost of living problem: Go to prison. It is offered and practiced by James Francis Murphy of Alton, Mo.

Murphy, who once ran for Sheriff of Madison County on the Socialist ticket, was recently released on parole from the Chester Penitentiary. He tried it outside for a while, but gave up. He said the most he could earn was \$2.95 a day, and that wouldn't go around for him, his wife and three children.

He left Alton the other day for Chester with the announcement that he would ask the Warden to revoke his parole. He pointed out that the request could hardly be refused, as he could commit an offense that would make the revocation mandatory, and thus swing open the hospitable gates of the prison to him.

### BILL WITH TWO SIDES.

Mayor Pearce, of Waukegan, Ill., who conducts a drug store as well as being the city's Chief Executive, thought his sight was failing the other day.

E. A. Martke, a pharmacist employed by the Mayor, had placed in the till what he supposed was a \$5 bill received in trade. The Mayor idly turned it over only to discover it was a \$5 bill on one side and a \$10 bill on the other.

The banks pronounce the Federal Reserve bank note genuine and say it is the result of an error in printing, but the Mayor is uncertain whether it is worth \$2.50, \$5, \$7.50, \$10 or \$15.

It is believed at least three others like it must be in circulation, as such notes are printed in blocks of four.

### HORNETS GIVE TIP ON WEATHER.

The age of prophets is not past, at least not the age of weather prophets. It's right here. The most recent instance of this is a Pennsylvania hunter called Bill Vanzant. Bill learns all about the weather from the hornets. Here is the way the narration runs:

Pointing up to two trees along the Baltimore Pike, near Swarthmore, upon which high up hang big hornets' hives, Bill said: "See those hives? They are high and dry and that indicates little wind, but we are going to have deep snow and plenty of it, and you

can tell the world for me that I am right when I say deep snow and plenty of it."

Vanzant declares hornets never like to get into deep snow, and their nature always indicates to them how to protect themselves for the winter months.

### A REMARKABLE ZEPPELIN FLIGHT.

From Germany now comes a startling story of the trip of a Zeppelin in November, 1917, which is of considerable interest despite the fact that it is over a year old. It appears that a Zeppelin started from Bulgaria for East Africa with 22 tons of munitions and medicines and a crew of 22. It had arrived over Khartoum, in the Sudan, when it was ordered by wireless to return because it was learned that the bulk of the forces of General von Lettow Vorbeck, the German commander in East Africa, had surrendered. It returned to its starting point four days after it had left. The Germans claim that this airship could have made a round trip between Berlin and New York, without stopping. It is also learned that the Zeppelin factory at Friedrichshafen is building an airship for transatlantic traffic, capable of carrying 100 passengers. It has nine engines and eight propellers. If the international situation clears up by next summer, the first flight will probably be made in July. The flight is expected to be made in 40 hours.

### MARINES SEEK BRIDES.

American maidens who have been worrying whether your marines would pop the question when they come home, stand "at ease."

A canvass of marine barracks here at Quantico, Va., where 10,000 men have been waiting their chance at the Hun, made by a reporter for the Leatherneck, the camp paper, shows that 90 per cent. of the single men intend marrying when they are discharged.

"We're tired of being single. We want to marry and settle down," is the consensus of replies.

These marines, many of whom will be discharged when the President declares the national emergency no longer exists, are fitting themselves for good jobs that will permit them to wed. Evening business classes are being held at the Y. M. C. A., and experts are explaining everything from bookkeeping and shorthand to soil cultivation and dairying.

The training the men have undergone admirably fits them for marriage. There isn't a marine in the service who doesn't claim to be able to wash his clothes whiter than any woman can ever get them. Every man can mend and press his own clothes. And as far as being "handy about the house," why, most of them can open a can of tomatoes with a toothpick and drive a nail with a feather duster.



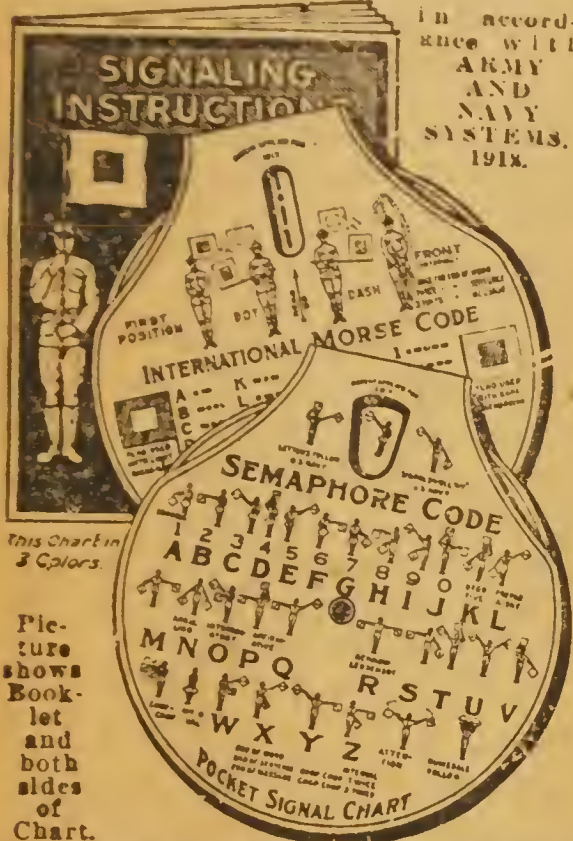
### ADAM'S TRASER PUZZLE.

This is a nut cracker. The way to do it is as follows: Turn the top of the two small loops toward you, taking hold of the two large loops with each hand. Hold firm the loop held with the left hand and pull the other toward the right, and at the same time impart a twisting motion away from you. You can get the rest of the directions with the puzzle. Price 12 cents each, by mail, postpaid.

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7	5	3	
4	3	4	7
8	9	8	8
7	4	7	8

One of the hardest puzzles ever invented. Mix blocks well; then move squares without removing the box, so that every line of figures, up and down and across, and the two diagonals, will each add up 23. The Blank space may be left in either of the four corners.

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New and amusing Joke. The victim is told to hold the tube close to his eye so as to exclude all light from the back, and then to remove the tube until pictures appear in the center. In trying to locate the pictures he will receive the finest black-eye you ever saw. We furnish a small box of blackening preparation with each tube, so the joke can be used in definitely. Those not in the trick will be caught every time. Absolutely harmless. Price, by mail, 15c each; 2 for 25c.

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### THE JOKE SPIKE.



This joke spike is an ordinary iron spike or very large nail, the same as is found in any carpenter's nail box. At the small end is a small steel needle, 1/2 inch in length, firmly set in spike. Take your friend's hat or coat and hang it on the wall by driving (with a hammer) the spike through it into the wall; the needle in spike will not injure the hat or garment, neither will it show on wall or wood where it has been driven. The deception is perfect, as the spike appears to have been driven half-way through the hat or coat, which can be left hanging on the wall. Price, 10 cents, or 3 for 25 cents; by mail, postpaid. H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

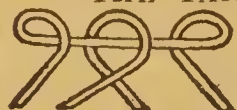
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My Moving Picture Machine is a good one and I would not give it away for \$25.00. It's the best machine I ever had and I wish everybody could have one. Addie Brcsky, Jeanesville, Pa. Box 34.

## Better Than a \$12.00 Machine

I am slow about turning in my thanks to you, but my Moving Picture Machine is all right. I have had it a long time and it has not been broken yet. I have seen a \$12.00 Machine but would not swap mine for it. Robert Lineberry, care of Revolution Store, Greenboro, N. C.



**A Real  
Moving  
Picture  
Show in  
Your Own Home**

# REAL MOVING PICTURES

Remember, this is a Genuine Moving Picture Machine and the motion pictures are clear, sharp and distinct.

The Moving Picture Machine is finely constructed, and carefully put together by skilled workmen. It is made of Russian Metal, has a beautiful finish, and is operated by a finely constructed mechanism, consisting of an eight wheel movement, etc. The projecting lenses are carefully ground and adjusted, triple polished, standard double extra reflector, throwing a ray of light many feet, and enlarging the picture on the screen up to three or four feet in area. The light is produced by a safety carbide generator, such as is used on the largest automobiles. This throws a dazzling white light of 500 candle-power on the screen.

It is not a toy; it is a solidly constructed and durable Moving Picture Machine. The mechanism is exceedingly simple and is readily operated by the most inexperienced. The pictures shown by this marvelous Moving Picture Machine are not the common, crude and lifeless Magic Lantern variety, but are life-like photographic reproductions of actual scenes, places and people, which never tire its audiences. This Moving Picture Machine has caused a rousing enthusiasm wherever it is used.

This Moving Picture Machine which I want to send you FREE, gives clear and life-like Moving Pictures as are shown at any regular Moving Picture show. It flashes moving pictures on the sheet before you. This Machine and Box of Film are FREE—absolutely free to every boy in this land who wants to write for an outfit, free to girls and free to older people. Read MY OFFER below, which shows you how to get this Marvelous Machine.

## How You Can Get This Great Moving Picture Machine—Read My Wonderful Offer to You

HERE IS what you are to do in order to get this amazing Moving Picture Machine and the real Moving Pictures. Send your name and address—that is all. Write name and address very plainly. Mail to-day. As soon as I receive it I will mail you 20 of the most beautiful premium pictures you ever saw—all brilliant and shimmering colors. These pictures are printed in many colors and among the titles are such subjects as "Betsy Ross Making the First American Flag"—"Washington at Home"—"Battle of Lake Erie," etc. I want you to distribute these premium pictures on a special 25-cent offer among the people you know. When you have distributed the 20 premium pictures on my liberal offer you will have collected \$6.00. Send the \$6.00 to me and I will immediately send you FREE the Moving Picture Machine with complete Outfit and the Box of Film.

50,000 of these machines have made 50,000 boys happy. Answer at once. Be the first in your town to get one.

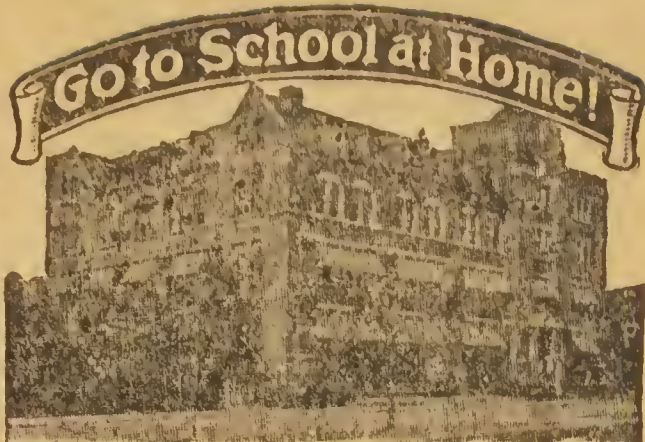
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Simply cut out this Free Coupon, pin it to a sheet of paper, mail to me with your name and address written plainly, and I will send you the 20 Pictures at once. Address

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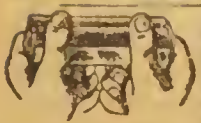
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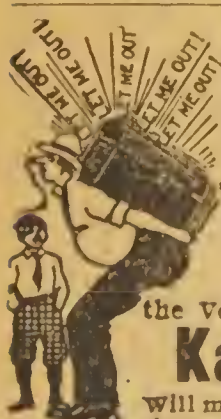
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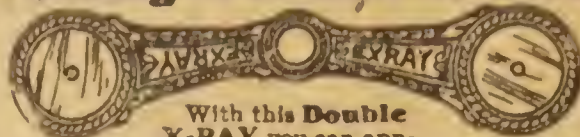
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# Wonderful Victory Over Baldness

HAIR GROWN ON MR. BRITTAIN'S BALD HEAD BY INDIANS' MYSTERIOUS OINTMENT

Now has Prolific Hair and Will Give True Recipe Free; it is Scientifically Verified

My head at the top and back was absolutely bald. The scalp was shiny. An expert said that as he thought the hair roots were extinct, and there was no hope of my ever having a new hair growth.

Yet now, at the age of 66, I have a luxuriant growth of soft, strong, lustrous hair! No trace of baldness.

## Indians' Secret of Hair Growth

At a time when I had become discouraged at trying various hair lotions, tonics, specialists' treatments, etc., I came across, in my travels a Cherokee Indian "medicine man" who had an elixir that he guaranteed would grow my hair. Although I had no faith, I gave it a trial. To my amazement, a light tuzz soon appeared. It developed, day by day, into a regular healthy growth and ere long my hair was as prolific as in my youthful days.

That I was amazed and happy is expressing my state of mind mildly.

## Hair Grew Luxuriantly

Obviously, the hair roots had not been dead, but were dormant in the scalp, awaiting the fertilizing potency of the mysterious pomade.

It became my sudden determination to possess the recipe or secret if I could. Having used my most persuasive arguments which convinced the aged savant of my sincerity, and that he had only fairness to expect from me, I succeeded in gaining the secret recipe by giving him a valuable rifle in exchange.

## I Put the Secret Away

My regular business took all my time, however, and I was compelled to forego my plans to introduce the wonderful ko-tal-ko (which I call for short kotalko) and I put the secret aside for some years.

That my own hair growth was permanent has been amply proved.

My honest belief is that hair roots rarely die even when the hair falls out through dandruff, fever, excessive dryness or other disorders. I am convinced, and am sure many scientists will agree, that the hair roots become imbedded within the scalp, covered by hard skin, so that they are like bulbs or seeds in a bottle which will grow when fertilized. Shampoos (which contain alkalis) and hair lotions which contain alcohol are enemies to the hair, as they dry it, making it brittle.

## The Secret Now Revealed

Recently I was induced, while on a business trip to London, to introduce kotalko, the Indian hair elixir. It met with an immediate demand and has since been introduced throughout England and France, where, despite the war, it is having a great sale. Its popularity comes chiefly from the voluntary endorsements of users. Many persons—men, women and children—are reporting new hair growth. Some cases were really more extraordinary than my own. For instance, a lady reported that kotalko grew a beautiful supply of blonde hair (her natural shade) after her head had been completely bald since a fever nine years previously, and she had worn a wig ever since.

A military officer had a bald spot which had been growing larger for some time. Within a few weeks it was completely covered. I could mention numerous examples. Now, having made arrangements here, I intend to supply kotalko according to the genuine Indian's formula to whomsoever wishes to obtain it. Ten cents will bring a testing box to you.

## Recipe Given Free

The recipe I shall be pleased to mail, free. Address: John Hart Brittain, BH-103, Station F, New York, N. Y. Or I will mail the recipe with a testing box of kotalko for 10 cents, silver or stamps.



## OH, YOU SKINNY!

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 826 Young Wild West's Silver Scoop; or, Cleaning Up a Hundred Thousand.  
 827 Young Wild West and the Oregon Outlaws; or, Arietta as a "Judge".  
 828 Young Wild West and "Mexican Matt"; or, Routing the Rawhide Rangers.  
 829 Young Wild West and the Comanche Queen; or, Arietta As An Archer.  
 830 Young Wild West and the "Gold Ring"; or, The Flashy Five of Four Flush.  
 831 Young Wild West's Double Rescue; or, Arietta's Race with Death.  
 832 Young Wild West and the Texas Rangers; or, Crooked Work On the Rio Grande.  
 833 Young Wild West's Branding Bee; or, Arietta and the Cow Punchers.  
 834 Young Wild West and His Partner's Pile, and How Arietta Saved It.  
 835 Young Wild West at Diamond Dip; or, Arietta's Secret Foe.  
 836 Young Wild West's Buckhorn Bowls, and How It Saved His Partners.

- 837 Young Wild West In the Haunted Hills; or, Arietta and the Aztec Arrow.  
 838 Young Wild West's Cowboy Dance; or, Arietta Annoying Admirer.  
 839 Young Wild West's Double Shot; or, Cheyenne Charlie's Life Line.  
 840 Young Wild West at Gold Gorge; or, Arietta and the Drop of Death.  
 841 Young Wild West and the Gulf Gang; or, Arietta's Three Shots.  
 842 Young Wild West's Treasure Trove; or The Wonderful Luck of the Girls.  
 843 Young Wild West's Leap in the Dark; or, Arietta and the Underground Stream.  
 844 Young Wild West and the Silver Queen; or, The Fate of the Mystic Ten.  
 845 Young Wild West Striking It Rich; or, Arietta and the Cave of Gold.  
 846 Young Wild West's Relay Race; or, The Flight at Fort Feather.  
 847 Young Wild West and the "Crooked" Cowboys; or, Arietta and the Cattle Stampede.  
 848 Young Wild West at Sizzling Fork; or, A Hot Time with the Claim Jumpers.  
 849 Young Wild West and "Big Buffalo"; or, Arietta at the Stake.  
 850 Young Wild West Raiding the Raiders; or, The Vengeance of the Vigilantes.  
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